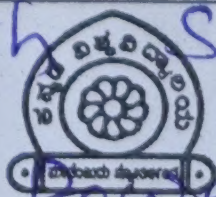


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THE AUTHOR

was born in Mecklenburgh Square, educated at Aldenham and Durham High School, and thence into the Natal Civil Service, from which he resigned in a year or two at the call of the South African War. Afterwards, he spent two years in Matabeleland as a Constable in the British South Africa Police. He then came to Australia, where he tramped, "box-kicked", and soldiered in the Royal Australian Imperial Corps. Then to New Zealand, and then to Tahiti. In 1914, found him scrub-cutting in the "back-blocks" of New South Wales. Walking, riding, and travelling by motor and train, he arrived in Sydney in time to join the 1st Division of the Australian Imperial Force, and take part in the Anzac landing on Gallipoli. Invalided with malaria, he returned to the South Seas, and later on to Australia and back to England.

A SOUTH SEA

by

S. W. POWELL

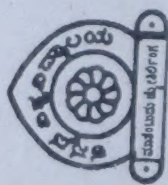
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A SOUTH SEA DIARY¹¹

(*Begun in the year 1912*)

February 9th

THIS will not be a diary in the literal sense. I shall write only when I have something to write about, making a sort of chapter of each entry. Daily entries would soon acquire a monotony which would kill the diary. Bore me, I mean, into dropping it, which would frustrate my desire to put on record a little of my life here. Or, it may be, my impressions. I am not yet sure which I want to record chiefly.

But I know what has led me to start this, after living in this place for nearly a year. Nothing so logical as a reason, but something which happened to me yesterday.

I had gone to town with Tehiva to meet the steamer. This is a monthly event, but we had missed the last two steamers, through wet weather, and had gone at other times. (It is already clear that I wish to keep a diary for other people to read.) We are now in the rainy season, I should mention. Well, yesterday Papeete seemed to be choked with tourists; there couldn't actually have been more than two hundred of them, but to me it was like Bournemouth in August. We ran into them wherever we turned. They nearly crowded us out of our favourite restaurant. And such people! I had never imagined that there were such people. (This is true, for I had never properly seen them before. They had always till then been so familiar to me that I never really saw them. But in three months they had grown unfamiliar, as unfamiliar as visitors from another world.)

I said to myself: Can these people really be of my race? Was I, but a year ago, one of them? I asked Tehiva if I resembled them. She said: No, not at all. You were always a little different, but so are all the white men who come to stay here. Now you are quite different—in colour and look and everything. You are more like us. All the same, you are a white man, though not one of these.

I caught the contempt in her tone, and I fully shared it. There was something contemptible as well as hateful about this mob. The men were puny or bloated, the women so artificial as to be grotesque, or so mannish as to be repulsive. Collectively they were like throwouts; there was something damningly wrong

with every one of them. But there was more than their personal appearance at fault. They seemed to have no minds of their own; they moved about in troops, under chance leadership, like cows which follow the whim of the momentary leader. They were like a herd of slaves let loose for the day and missing their accustomed masters. I noticed in their gait a constraint and jerkiness which made me think of fetters. They did not walk, they got along, and even so they made more hustle than progress. There was a painful want of dignity in the bearing of these members of a superior race, whom now I was judging by a new standard.

Their manners were appalling, though many of them were obviously of what is called the better class. They made loud personal remarks about the natives and Europeans they met. They stared at us as if we were specimens in a Zoo. But there was no intelligence in their eyes, nothing but a dull curiosity. The drawn gravity of their faces rarely relaxed. That gravity was all that made me pity them. They were unhappy people; they had lost the faculty of enjoyment. Even when free to amuse themselves they could not do so. They had to be amused, and here was no organisation for their amusement. Spontaneous happiness was beyond their power—but not, I thought, beyond their conception. They had come on this cruise in the dim hope of finding it in new scenes and new experiences. But it was not for them to know. They had been spiritually castrated. Their manhood and womanhood had been taken from them; they had been given a synthetic substitute and made parts of a machine. As individuals, as human beings, even as creatures of earth, they were a total loss. Were they a gain to the State? I could not tell. All I knew was that they were repulsive to me—these who had once been my people—and that instead of being an alien in Tahiti, I should be an alien in my own land. From that moment I knew that I should never leave Tahiti. And, as I have said, that day I resolved to keep a diary. I can only explain this resolve by the fact that my mind had been moved and new ideas set going in it, since, to ensure a record on the spot, this starting of a diary would have been more reasonable if I had thought of going away. There would then have been more urgency. I had not had such a thought from the beginning, for I had bought a miniature plantation soon after my arrival; but it was the first time I had been struck to reflect that I should *never* leave Tahiti, unless temporarily; that I could never more suffer life among my own people. My own people had taken

A SOUTH SEA DIARY

the wrong turning. Here I was among a people like my own before they had travelled so disastrously far. That those I was now among were somehow kin to me was proved by the fact that I could live with them, sympathise with them and understand them.

February 14th

ON re-reading my first entry I see that, in respect of the record, I am almost in a vacuum. Even a diary should contain some hints of personal surroundings, if it is to provide a record of the past. I have mentioned Papeete, I have mentioned a miniature plantation, and that is all.

The place where I am writing is a veranda. It is covered with plaited coconut fronds piled one on the other in the form of thatch, and is really an extension of the roof. Single coconut fronds (they plait into a rough quadrilateral) protect the front and sides from sun and rain, but these are hung so that they can be drawn up in sections. This is afternoon, the sun is now on my right, so the right-hand side only of the veranda is screened. There is a light wind, enough to make an air, which lightly rustles the coconut plumes in front of me.

Coconut trees face me in all directions. They stand in long ranks, and I look down the alleys between these ranks to the sea, where the line of the reef makes a Chinese-white edging to the horizon. It doesn't always: its appearance alters with the state of the tide and the weather. Just now, the wind being light and the tide being fairly high, the sea breaking on the reef makes a line of foam. When the tide is low and the wind light you see nothing but a black line which is the reef itself, a broad, flat rampart of coral running all round the island, except for two or three breaks where vessels can enter. The largest break is at Papeete, the capital.

I am sitting at the back of the house. Behind me, at the front, about thirty yards away, runs the coastal road, by which, with some rather rough travelling in one part, one can go all round the island. Between here and Papeete it is level and smooth, and I can get there by motor-bus in forty minutes. I possess no car nor any vehicle; a neighbour takes my copra to Papeete, and brings me goods when I want them, for a consideration.

I rise about six o'clock. I light the fire, of coconut husks, in the palm-leaf kitchen outside, and Tehiva makes the coffee. She makes coffee well; all natives do, having learned the art from the French. By this time the Chinese baker has called and left the bread in a box on top of the gate-post, where also the mailman (the driver of the motor-bus) leaves our letters. The bread is as French as the coffee, which we drink with coconut cream. This is made by grating a coconut and squeezing out its thick juice through a piece of muslin. It is an excellent substitute for cow's cream, and I am not alone in preferring it. It is richer and has a sweet, nutty flavour.

Even in the rainy season a day's continuous rain is the exception (a three-days' rain occurs occasionally, but an afternoon thunderstorm is its most common form), and if the morning is dry I go out, after I have had my coffee, into the plantation. Here there is always something to do, if I don't hurry over my jobs, to which one has in this climate little inclination. In the shade it is seldom too hot for work. Every morning there are fallen nuts to be gathered, and these I bring to a shelter where I can split them whatever the weather is. Having split them, I leave them to dry in the sun, and when the nut has come apart from the husk sufficiently, I prise it open with a knife, and it is ready to be made into copra. This is done by cutting up the nut and laying the pieces out on bags or sheets of corrugated iron to dry still more in the sun. A little rain won't hurt it, but it must not get too wet, or it will rot. Tehiva usually helps me in this task, but I am now as expert as she in it. From the beginning, in all the work of the plantation, she has been my chief instructor. I have learned the language too from her, so that I speak and understand it almost as well as a native.

I bought the plantation for three hundred pounds. It consisted of young trees, all in full bearing, on the seaward side of the road, and a few old trees on the other side, with the remains of a vanilla plantation. Vanilla was a principal crop of the island some years ago, but a disease got into the plants and destroyed them. I am now, on advice, replanting, and I hope that when my vanilla plantation is bearing it will add considerably to my income. Nothing used to be so profitable here as vanilla, especially for the small grower, but since the last epidemic there has been a fear of the disease. I have planted coconuts through the vanilla, so that if it is attacked I shall still have coming-on coconut trees.

Most of my work is done in this part of the island. Full-grown coconut trees need very little attention if the ground under them is planted with running grass, which combines with the shade of the leaves to keep down the weeds. The grass has a little blue flower, and makes a thick green-and-blue carpet, very beautiful and soft to walk upon. Also it muffles the sound of the coconuts falling in the night, the crash of which is otherwise rather disturbing. By day one scarcely hears them.

Besides the few coconuts which we use for coconut cream and coconut sauce, and the great majority which we make into copra, there are nuts which we use for drinking. These are young nuts, and we reserve particular trees for them, because drinking-nuts vary in quality a great deal. The worst are insipid but refreshing; the best have a wonderful flavour, sparkling and appetising. I bring them down by means of a long, light pole with an acute-angled arm at the end of it. This is one native method; but another, and the only method with tall trees, is to climb them. A young nut is full to the brim; one strips off the husk, trepans it and drinks from the shell.

There was no house when I bought this place, because the land had been part of a large plantation. The house cost me ten pounds to build. It will need renewing in seven or eight years, but that at the most will cost no more than another ten pounds. I employed natives to build it, and they found the material. The roof, as I have said, is of coconut-leaf thatch; the walls are of thin bamboo, which grows thickly near here up a valley where anyone may go and cut it. Walls of bamboo, with mats inside to let down against the wind and rain, are substantial enough for the climate, as the nights are never cold. The temperature is, in fact, extraordinarily even, the changes being trifling throughout the year, compared with those in climates ranking as favoured. For warm nights a sheet, for cooler nights one or two light blankets, are all the bed-clothes one needs. It is difficult to distinguish winter from summer by the temperature. The wet season is called the summer, but it is often hotter by day in the dry season; even then the thermometer indoors seldom rises above ninety. Seventy-five degrees is about the mean of temperature, and thirty degrees its extreme range.

Inside the house are two rooms, a bedroom and a sitting-room, but the verandas, back and front, make extra sitting-rooms, and we are more often there than indoors. We eat usually on the back veranda, as it is the more secluded of the two and handy to the kitchen, where the native oven is the principal feature. This

is simply a shallow, circular depression in the earth, in which a fire is made and round stones laid on the embers. The embers heat the stones, and the food is placed on them, to be quickly covered with breadfruit leaves tied together in bunches. Bunches and bunches of breadfruit leaves are piled on the food (most of which is first wrapped in banana leaf) and the heat of the stones is thus retained, while the food loses nothing by that common cause, evaporation. In two hours it is cooked, and cooked to perfection. We cook nearly all our food in this manner, and most of it costs us next to nothing: fish from the sea, for the trouble of getting it; breadfruit and bananas from the land at the front; plantains from the hills, for which we have to pay a trifle, unless I go myself and cut them; taro, yams, sweet potatoes and arrowroot from our garden on the other side of the road; fowls which we feed on grated coconuts, eggs from our hens, an occasional kid shot on the mountains, and an occasional sucking-pig. Our chief meal is at midday, and we dine lightly at six. Just before dinner we bathe, but not in salt water. A brook runs into the sea five minutes' walk away, and we bathe in a pool near its mouth. The evening bath in fresh water is *de rigueur* in Tahiti; you may have it under a tap, but you must on no account omit it altogether, or your wife will leave you. She will not lie down with a man who has not bathed.

Having no wish for a divorce, I shall now conclude this entry and go to the pool. Tehiva has been there for the last two hours, not washing herself but washing clothes. We might have a swim in the sea, but we shall bathe in the pool afterwards to get the salt off. Then we shall return and have an omelette, bread and butter and coffee. Afterwards we shall lounge on the veranda, or perhaps take a stroll to the village. By ten we shall be in bed.

I have spent half the afternoon on this entry, but I had nothing to do that could not be done to-morrow, and I felt more like scribbling than working. There is a native saying which has much force here: *Haere maru*—go easy. Its corollary is *Ananahi*—to-morrow: and if a thing can be done to-morrow as well as it can be done to-day, why should it not be?

February 20th

I HAVE just finished bagging and weighing a load of copra. Tehiva held the bags open while I shovelled it in, and then we

slung them, three at a time, on my steelyard, and I carefully took the weights. My neighbour, a native, will come early in the morning with his market-cart, pick up the bags and deliver them at the warehouse in Papeete which buys my produce. It fetches just enough to keep us going. I myself need little, and Tehiva's tastes are not what one would call extravagant. She makes her own frocks and her own hats, and the material does not cost much. Shoes and stockings she wears only when we are in town, where she is satisfied to go once or twice a month. We then have to do a picture, and have a good feed, with wine, at a Chinese restaurant; we promenade the front, we look at the shops round about the market-place, and if she fancies any small article I buy it for her. She is shrewd enough about costs in small money values, but large money values become meaningless to her. Five hundred pounds would be as far as her estimation of money would take her: that would be a very large sum; so would five thousand, fifty thousand or five hundred thousand. Thus, if I told her that I had come into twenty thousand pounds, she would be no more excited or expectant than if I said a thousand. This is because her desires, in monetary values and monetary terms, have never exceeded what she can reckon in francs. I believe that this is less from her inability to reckon, if she were to try, than from the natural moderation of her desires. For her natural intelligence is, I have discovered, quite as good as mine. In a contest of wits she can usually beat me. She thinks quickly and acts quickly, and has few, if any, illusions.

This afternoon she has gone fishing. If she had not wanted to go fishing I should have got her to help me with the copra in the cooler part of the day, but the tide and the wind were just right and it was necessary for her to go. Tide in these seas, by the way, has none of the normal regularity of tide; you may have a high tide for weeks or a low tide for as many weeks; or either may continue for a day or two or for no more than a few hours. What governs the tide in this part and some contingent parts of the ocean has never been positively determined. This afternoon there were signs of a change of wind, and even if the tide had not risen, this would have made fishing from the reef difficult or impossible.

So she took down the long, barbed fish-spear from its brackets under the thatch, launched the canoe and paddled off, dressed in her scarlet-and-white *pareo*, which covers her from breast to knee. She has red and white, red and orange, blue and white, blue and orange *pareos*. The *pareo* is her day-wear and her

night-wear; I too wear a *pareo* at night, when it is fastened round the waist like a sarong. In the day-time, about the house, she sometimes wears a frock over the *pareo*, but she puts on a frock invariably if she goes outside the gate. The road is European; the sea is not.

With the wind in its present direction there will be deep-sea fish close to the reef; she will walk along it, wait her chance and select her prey. Sometimes she has to cast the spear and go into the water after the fish, but as often as not she strikes without releasing the spear. I have tried spearing fish, but it is not easy. Inside the reef, from a canoe, one can fish either with the spear or with hook and line; and there is night-fishing by torchlight. The torch fixed in the bow of the canoe draws the fish to the light. Another method is the fish drive, similar to a game drive, in which a whole village may join; and yet another way—but this is only employed upon a journey—is to tow an unbaited hook of mother-of-pearl. The glitter of the hook is the attraction, but there is no certainty of a catch, though you tow it all day, and the idea behind this method seems to be that one should never miss a chance, however slight.

In letting Tehiva go to the reef and spear fish for us, I am doing nothing derogatory to myself as a man. The fish-spear is used—and used with equal skill, I may say—by both sexes. It is customary for the woman to go fishing when the man is busy, and men who are constantly employed on land hardly use the fish-spear at all. As regards the division of labour in Tahiti, the rule—and it is a very good one, I think—is that while most everyday jobs are interchangeable, a women never does anything which requires masculine strength. On the other hand, no man is above cooking the dinner, and I often take this job over when Tehiva has other things to do.

I met her in Papeete. It was just a month after my arrival, when another steamer was in. She had come to town for the occasion, and we met outside the Casino picture theatre, where the band was, as usual before the performance, playing in the balcony, and girls were dancing in the street. She was with another girl, and they were looking on. Something about her specially attracted me: I think it was the simple pleasantness of her features and the simple kindness of her smile. I noted her slim robustness, the firmness of her figure and the excellence of her poise, the graceful lines of her from top to toe, the air of life about her; but these in Papeete are common characteristics. It was none of these that made me single her out, though they

were necessary to crown my interest in her and rouse desire in me. What attracted me to her more than to a hundred others as superficially good-looking and desirable, was the glimpse I had of her personality. And that, I suppose, is the secret of sexual attraction. One sees something, apart from good looks, in another, which specially appeals to oneself. General good looks, even beauty, would never turn the scale. Than formal beauty by itself nothing can be more wearisome.

I spoke to her. I had only a few words of Tahiti then, but she had enough English and French to answer me. I asked her if she and her friend would like to see the picture with me. They would, so I bought tickets and we went inside. Afterwards I went home with them, or rather to the house where they were staying, for both of them lived in the country and were lodging with relatives.

Tehiva came with me to the gate when I was leaving about midnight. I had made up my mind about her. She was what I wanted most in all Tahiti, and it was no craving of the hour: of that I felt sure: no appetite to be indulged and done with. I had had other girls here, but I had never had this feeling about them. Marriage I did not contemplate, but have Tehiva I must, if she was to be had. I knew that she was no *hulahula* girl, and I had learned that girls in Tahiti are not to be got for the mere asking. That had been a slight surprise to me, as it is, I think, to the majority of men who come here. They overlook the fact that, whatever the moral code may be, a girl has her likes and dislikes, and that the easier the moral code the more freedom there is for these. In Tahiti the moral code may be called easy, but this gives a latitude of choice which makes a girl more particular than she could otherwise afford to be. And the girls of Tahiti have quite pronounced tastes. I could not tell if I was pleasing enough to Tehiva, but I put my best foot foremost, thinking it wisest to settle the question there and then. For I had learned a little already of Tahitian psychology.

I embraced her and told her, as well as I could, how much I wanted her. She set the question at rest with charming straightforwardness.

We went softly back, and while I waited in the shadows of the garden she brought sheets and pillows out to a summer-house, and there on a thick mat we passed the night.

Her relatives showed no surprise at my reappearance in the morning. They asked no questions, they made no jokes; their

behaviour was thoroughly well-bred. Tehiva had to go home, or her parents would have been anxious about her, so next day I left Papeete with her and her friend. They lived in a distant part of the island, and here for several weeks I was her father's guest. It was he who told me of the plantation which was for sale, and he who advised me to buy it. Not that he wished to get rid of me: I could have stayed with him for ever if I had liked.

Tehiva and I gave a feast when she left her old home. It was, virtually, a marriage feast, and the omission of the wedding ceremony troubled no one. That was a matter of individual convenience and taste. Some people married themselves, while others were married by the mayor in a tricolour sash. You pleased yourself.

At nightfall we drove in a hired car to our new home, which was half-way to Papeete. Tehiva's trousseau was not excessive. It went into a *pareo* tied at the four corners. On the way home, however, we stopped at a Chinaman's store, and I bought her a camphorwood box. She was delighted. Hitherto she had only had the use of one, and a camphorwood box is almost an essential in Tahiti, if one's clothes are to be preserved from damp and insects. Damp, in particular, on account of the humidity, against which, as well as against the moth, camphorwood seems to be a protective.

That was a year ago this coming week.

She is wonderfully fresh to me still. I have come to know her, of course, but knowing her has not staled her. I doubt if I love her in the old romantic sense of the word, and I should be surprised if she loves me in that way. Greatly surprised. Tahitians are too practical to be romantic. Romance is a flower—or a weed—of European civilisation. Love in Tahiti is, above all, sane, with the sanity of Nature. Europeans alone bring insanity into Tahitian love. Finding no insanity in it appears to madden them sometimes. I am thankful to have escaped that horror. For it must be nothing short of horror to love in that way without response, to be fended off always by this wall of sanity. Tehiva and I are friends, mates, playmates, comrades, companions, lovers without strong passion. Thus we are never subject to the emotional strains, the torturing discords, the violent clashes, which are the inevitable outcome of strong passion. We have breezes, an occasional gale, but never a tempest. There is perhaps passion in our love, but there is none of the cruelty of passion. We are not jealous of each other's thoughts. Yet my love for her is curiously exclusive. She is all

the womanhood my nature wants, so that I have no serious interest in other women. The fulfilment of that want is what makes the difference I believe, between happiness and unhappiness.

February 28th

ON the other side of the road my land runs some way up into the hills. This part of it is of very little value, being too steep and rocky to be planted. Throughout Tahiti this is the same; the flat coastal zone is extremely fertile, but, excepting the valleys, the whole interior is, for industrial purposes, almost worthless. A little good timber, the pandanus palm, *fei* (the hill plantain), limes and bamboos are to be got there; wild pig and wild goat are to be shot; and Chinese charcoal-burners make a living in the hills; but although many fruits, including coconuts, will grow at all but the highest altitudes, it does not pay to plant them. The upper stretches of my land are therefore wild.

I go up there when I want solitude or a few hours' change, and come back with a basketful of limes, a bunch of *fei* or a bundle of leaves of the pandanus palm. Once I returned in triumph with a pig, but I seldom take a gun now, as it is awkward to lug home if one has other things to carry. If one takes a gun one has to look for pig—and bring one back or look a fool—and I don't go up there to look for anything; the limes and the pandanus leaves and the *fei*, if one knows where to go, can be got without looking for them. I find shooting and fishing a waste of leisure. Some people can't be happy with nothing to do. I am glad not to be one of them.

Tehiva is pleased when I bring home a basketful of limes or a bunch of russet-brown *fei*, the latter being excellent food when baked in the native oven, and the former being needed with fish and also for sauces; she is no less pleased when I bring home a fat bundle of pandanus leaves. She makes these into hats and into mats. Both last for years, the hats being soft and durable, though not as fine in texture as those of Panama. Our floors are covered with these mats (not all of Tehiva's making, God help her), and we use one doubled on top of the kapok mattress. It keeps the bed cool. Tehiva had never used a bed before she came to me; she had always slept on a mat. She did not mind being raised above the floor, being accustomed to sleep on a *paepae*, a kind of dais, but she found the mattress hot; and it was at her suggestion that we compromised, very successfully.

Eating at a table was an innovation to which she took less readily, but she bravely acquired the habit. I don't mind sitting on the mat to eat in native company, but my European blood revolted at doing this habitually, and she saw that it was ridiculous for me to sit at the table and she on the floor. I laughed at her, and that was the end of it. The use of knife and fork she acquired also, but when fingers seem better we allow them. In table manners we favour the rational rather than the formal. When things have to be dipped in sauce we dip them with our fingers, and we use sauce with nearly every meal. We also dip bread (I know it is very vulgar) in our coffee: but we wash our hands before and after eating: and not all civilised people do that.

. I was up in the high lands yesterday. It was a perfect afternoon, so perfect that I knew rain was coming, and this morning looks like the beginning of a three days' downpour. I don't mind it: one enjoys the coolness and the fresh smell of it. Rain here invigorates me as much as it does the earth. I don't mind getting caught in it, for a soaking does not chill if one can change quickly, and it is no trouble to strip off a singlet and trousers and put on dry ones. I am learning to go barefooted, and this, while one should not do so where the ground is rough and liable to cut the feet, is an advantage on the soft, thick grass, where the dew lies long in the morning and boots get soaked. Socks, too, if one turns up trousers: it is a choice between having the socks or the bottoms of the trousers saturated; but going barefoot one can escape this choice. I should not, however, think of venturing unshod into the hills; there is too much jagged rock and rotten timber there. No snakes, thank God, nor anywhere in these islands. Scorpions are the worst of our crawlers, and they are not numerous.

It was a stiff, rough climb to the place I reached: there are tracks up there, but you cannot call them paths, and thorny bushes, dead wood and lianas obstruct them. I always carry a bush-knife—what in South America would be called a machete. It is useful in many ways—to cut *fei*, to slash through the ropes of lianas, and to deal effectively with wasps' nests. One has to keep one's eyes open for these during a large part of the year. They are everywhere, but worst in the thick bush; and the Tahitian wasp is as large as a hornet. I rather think he is a hornet, but Europeans call him a wasp. His native name is bird-that-stings. At times he has become such a pest as seriously to impede plantation work, and once the Government had to give a reward for every wasps' nest brought to the local gendarme. Then the

mina-bird was introduced from Australia, but the help he gave fell considerably short of expectations, and, as so often happens, the imported ally has become more a nuisance than an aid.

The wasps' nests are fairly easy to deal with if one sees them in time and has such a knife as I carry. You sight the nest, which is usually not out of knife reach, and approach it cat-like till you are within striking distance. When the wasps are most ferocious the nest is a moving mass of yellow and black, a brilliant and beautiful sight. You strike—hard and sure—with the broad-ended blade, and that is the end of this lot. You can kill the stunned survivors where they have fallen. Smoking the wasps out is a rather safer process, but if you are busy or travelling it takes too long. I smashed up two nests on my way yesterday and returned without a sting. The stings are painful, but they do not raise big swellings on me now (they did at first, and many people, even natives, suffer severely from them); with me the pain goes off in half an hour. But once I was nearly stunned by a wasp which flew straight at me and stung me on the forehead between the eyes. It was like the impact of a stone, and I had to sit down for some minutes to recover.

I am not a sportsman in the ordinary sense: I take no pleasure in killing wild things for killing's sake: but I always have a thrill of satisfaction in destroying a wasps' nest. There is danger, for you may miss your aim, and then you are for it—you had better bolt then and hope for the best. The satisfaction comes from that happy and none too frequent combination of a good deed done and danger escaped.

On reaching the elevation where the pandanus palm grows in abundance, I gathered an armful of the leaf, found a lime-tree and filled my coconut-leaf basket from it. These jobs done, I sat down on a rock giving me a clear outlook. This I always do; and the silence and solitude are what, personally, I come up for, though I am glad to do Tehiva's little errands. Below me lay a long stretch of the coastal belt; so thickly covered with coconut trees and bush that I could only see vestiges of houses in it. I could see where the village was, and I could see a tiny bit of my own roof; but it was not noticeable; it had to be detected. The heads of the palms gave a lacy outline to the coast; beyond them was the reef, that day and from this viewpoint a black thread, and then a vast arc of ocean. The ocean was an intense unbroken blue, dark against the sky, where diaphanous clouds were rising from the immensely distant horizon; inside the reef the water was a much paler blue, pencilled and patched v.

violet and soft purple, marking the shoals of coral. There were a few canoes to be seen, and dots on the reef which were people, but beyond the reef was blue vacancy. Not a ship, not a boat, not even a smudge of smoke to show that steamers existed. I might have been looking down on Tahiti before Cook landed here—or after the *Bounty* had sailed, leaving Heywood and his companions to their short-lived paradise. And what paradise it must have been for them—in those days and for men of their calling ! I wonder, did they grudge the exacted payment ? One thing I will swear, that up to their dying day they never forgot Tahiti. I think of them as my forerunners, the pioneers who made my life here easy for me. Yet among the people of Tahiti that first venture of the white men in these islands, that first mating of white and brown, is as if it had never been. Tradition is a poor thing beside the written word. Memory too, which is tradition in the individual, as tradition is memory in the race ; so I will keep this diary.

Silent as that place was where I sat, the silence was not complete. At times I heard queer noises, which I have heard before : sounds like a sudden rush of wind through the leaves of one tree ; movements in the brushwood followed by stiliness. I got up once to investigate a movement in the brushwood which had seemed to be quite near me. I thought of pig, but there was nothing there ; nor had I noticed any subsequent sound to show that some creature was retiring. The abrupt agitation of the leaves in one spot was inexplicable, for there was very little wind to-day in the open, and in this thick bush, sheltered by the hill-side, none.

I had had a creeping of the flesh on the first occasion when something like this had happened ; on the next occasion I had a slighter creeping ; now I have reached the stage of being merely curious. Nothing awful has befallen me ; no spooks have come out of the bush and threatened my life.

Do we ever lose some remnant of belief in ghosts ? Our education smothers it, but it lives in our primitive selves, because those primitive ancestors who live in us believed positively in ghosts. To the Tahitian a ghost is as real as a living person. No Tahitian will come up alone into the hills even as far as I went yesterday. When they go they go in couples, and even in couples they would not go at night. The hills are the haunts of the *tupapahu*, the spirits of the dead : they fly about in the trees and catch you by the hair ; but they are much less dangerous by day than by night, and by day you are comparatively safe in

company. Perhaps it is necessary to be so or go without *fei*, which is such an excellent food and grows only in the hills. Our beliefs are not exempt from the law of necessity. Man does not cherish beliefs that would make life impossible or even very inconvenient for him. He has that much sense.

That rustling in the brushwood *might* have been caused by a pig, though it was odd that I heard no more and found no trace of the beast; and strong puffs of wind might be somehow generated here; but once this sound of wind had distinctly suggested to me the passage through the leaves of some unseen body, more than large enough to be visible.

I draw no conclusions. I merely record.

Tehiva does not mind my going alone up there, though she would not like her brother or her father to go—if either imaginably could: but there is a virtue in my foreign birth, I fancy. At any rate she is not afraid to sleep in the dark with me. A lamp burns all night in every native house; it may be turned low, but a glimmer of light is essential to keep prowling ghosts away.

March 5th

LAST night Tehiva and I went to a *himene* meeting. Literally translated this will sound dull, for *himene* is the native corruption of "hymn." The early missionaries taught these people to sing hymns, but the English style of hymn-singing did not appeal to the native. However, he saw something in it; he liked singing, and here was an occasion to sing. So he dropped the English hymn-tunes, amplified and beautified the hymns till nothing was left of the original, and sang them to chants of his own making. No one hearing these would imagine that what he was listening to had had its origin in a hymn, and he might not guess that religious significance attached to it. I myself had no suspicion of this for a long time. I did not at first connect the word *himene* with "hymn," and thought that I was attending village singing-parties. I was struck by the beauty of the voices and their perfect tune and time, and realised that I was among a musical people. For here was no carefully selected choir, but half a village singing.

Anyone acquainted with the manners and mentality of the missionary will wonder how the Tahitian came to attain this freedom. Many years ago he turned the missionaries out for their tyrannies and exploitations. Since then unofficial mission-

aries have come—missionaries of peculiar sects, such as the Mormon and Seventh-Day Adventist—but they have not gained any but small followings, and the natives now have their own pastors and preachers. There are French Catholic priests in many of the villages, but their adherents are a small minority.

Himene meetings are held on nights of the full moon (they may be postponed if the weather is unfavourable) and the whole neighbourhood attends them. They are a social more than a religious gathering. Once or twice a year a great singing contest is held of as many villages as can conveniently take part in it. Then the singing continues all night and into the next day, the audience sleeping when sleep overtakes them, and waking to hear their own choirs or for notable performances.

The meeting Tehiva and I attended last night was merely one of the local monthly meetings. It took place as usual in the village hall—a good-sized building of bamboo and coconut leaf. Horse-drawn carts and carriages and a few cars were parked in a grassy space outside, and barrows and stalls lined the road. Here you can buy ice-cream, water-melon in huge pink slices and green coconuts to drink. If you wanted coffee and something more substantial you could go to the Chinese café.

We did not enter the hall, but stood for some minutes in the open doorway. On a platform at the back sat the director, with some of the village elders, and the singers filled the greater part of the hall. All sat cross-legged on the floor. The director gave out the item, but there was no conducting. The men sang, and then the women sang, and then all sang together. There was no accompaniment, but none was needed. The voices were wonderfully true and wonderfully sweet, the melody wholly *sui generis*, and therefore indescribable. Its characteristic, and that of most of their melodies, was a note of yearning, plaintive, affecting and yet agreeable, which worked its way into the memory. There was no assault on sentiment, no sob-stuff; the effect was like that of a beautiful flower or perfume, but the impression was much deeper and more lasting. Heard two or three times, I doubt if one could ever forget it. It seemed to me to express the underlying spirit of this people. On the surface they are merry, beneath it they are not; they know too much, they see too clearly, and they do not blind themselves, as we so often do. But to make this clear vision of life bearable they have cultivated humour and wit, which they use at every opportunity. I shall make no attempt to reproduce it in this diary—at least, I hope not.

Anyone may enter the hall and sit at the back, but much the most of the audience stays outside. The bamboo walls release the sound, and on a still night one can hear the singing at quite a distance. Tehiva and I sat on the grass, on a shawl which we had brought for the purpose. Some people had brought mats and cushions. The walls outside were lined with people, sitting or reclining, and the moon showed everything up as if it were day. Not day in Tahiti, perhaps, but day in England. You could see every detail of the mountain background, and some features more clearly than by day, such as the silver glitter of the streams that spouted into the gorges. The silver and black of the palms made their shapes, far and near, very conspicuous. The light had the appearance of a sea of light, as of something in which everything was laved; it had a tint which can best be described as mother-of-pearl. It would be going too far to say that there was anything seemingly unreal about the scene, but it was everyday reality transfigured. It was such a reality as idealist philosophers have imagined to lie behind appearances. The moon, which had been like a golden platter when we came, was now, as it rose higher and higher, becoming tremendously distant. It seemed a very little moon to give such light, for the moon was no brighter than what it shone on, and almost pale in the sea of light; one perceived that the light was from elsewhere and that the moon was no more than reflecting it.

Not everybody came to listen to the singing. Youth came for its specific ends, to make its own unheard music. The *himene* meetings serve a purpose for which they were not intended: the meeting of boy and girl. Among the "guests star-scattered on the grass" (how graphic is that line of Omar now to me!) was a good sprinkling of young couples. As the evening wore on they grew less; they melted imperceptibly away into the friendly neighbouring shadows; but now and again we heard their low laughter and little outcries. The bush and the coconut trees hid them; the small sounds they made did not spoil the effect of the music, and nobody was scandalised. What they were doing was natural, and that was sufficient. Later on, when they were older if not wiser, they would sit and sing with the choir. That they were wise in their day nobody doubted. If they did not make love now they were wasting their time.

Before going home we went and drank coffee at the Chinaman's. This was just a long shop with a counter dividing it lengthwise. At the back to the roof were rolls and rolls of calico, and shelves packed with such general merchandise as one would

find in an English village shop. There were, besides, things which one might not or would not find there, such as fishing-hooks, fish-spear heads, cordage, toothed iron bits for grating coconuts, pointed iron bits for stripping the husk, bottles of coconut oil and electric torches. All the people anoint themselves with scented coconut oil and dress their hair with it. They scent it with a certain flower, which counteracts its heavy, oily smell and gives it a peculiar fragrance. I should miss it at once if Tehiva stopped using it; it is the aroma of Tahitian life.

In the front part of the shop were small, round tables; this was the café. Here we sat down and were served, in the light of oil-lamps. It was squalid, sitting here after being in the moonlight, but contrasts such as this have their use as foils. Life is a cunning artist.

We ate coconut pies with our coffee. They were shaped like jam puffs, and not at all bad. The young Chinaman who served us wore blue cotton trousers, a singlet, and loose straw slippers in which he flip-flopped among the tables. He was a new arrival and at present working off his passage money. His master's wife, in shiny black trousers and jacket, appeared for a moment in the doorway leading to the kitchen. She too was a new arrival. Our Chinaman had previously had a native wife, but this young woman had tired of him, she had been unfaithful, and he had decided to import a helpmate of his own breed. Many Chinamen, however, settle down permanently with native wives, and have large families by them. The offspring are natives in thought and speech, and the next generation almost obliterates the Chinese cast in their countenances. The Chinese, who in China, for thousands of years, have absorbed their successive conquerors, are in Tahiti absorbed. Soil is stronger than blood, it seems. But it is believed that the Chinese and the Europeans here have saved the Tahitian race from its threatened extinction. After many years of dwindling it is now on the increase, but the pure-blooded stock is scarce. You might not guess it from appearances, but you would discover it if you inquired into pedigrees. Tehiva has white blood on her mother's side, yet I was never able to detect it in her. She is light in complexion, but so were the Tahitian women when Cook found them. The Tahitian type is extraordinarily persistent, except where some strong foreign ancestor has set his seal on a line.

We were glad to get out into the moonlight again. The *himene* was still proceeding, but we had had our fill of it, and, still very wide awake by reason of the brightness, we sauntered home hand in

hand like a pair of children, dawdling and dallying in the white shine and the black shadows of the road.

March 9th

WE again missed the steamer through heavy rain yesterday. I was not sorry, though I must really get used to these people and not let them get on my nerves. They can't help being incongruous here, and it ought to be possible to ignore them, or to look on them as amusing freaks, as Tehiva does. Fortunately for the white man living in Tahiti, the native views the generaliiity of tourist as belonging to a different kind, almost a different breed. The European may easily forfeit his respect. The baser types of European he frankly despises, as he despises the Chinaman and the negro. The worst thing he can say about a girl is that she associates with foreign sailors. Then, and then only, she ranks as a whore.

We might have waited a few days and gone to meet the steamer coming the other way, but she never has so many people, they are less touristy, and less interest is taken in her. The one is an institution, the other isn't. Propaganda might make the other as popular, for there is not so much difference as to make the one popular and the other neglected; perhaps it is good for our pockets that nobody has tried this. Why some occasions should be more popular than others, why Christmas should be the great festival in England and New Year's Day in Scotland, are problems for the mass psychologist. When they are solved the propagandist will deal with them to the benefit of commerce and—it goes without saying, I suppose—of national prosperity. The English will then have two Christmases and the Scotch two New Years, and the shopkeepers, hotel-keepers, amusement-caterers and manufacturers will be so much the richer. Roll on the propagandist age.

We arrived in town in time to see the steamer off. The wharf, as usual, was packed, chiefly with women and girls in their best and brightest, and Tehiva waved her handkerchief as enthusiastically as any of them. The warm-heartedness of the Tahitian used to astonish me. It is general, not particular. His opinion of the stranger may be uncomplimentary, but his heart opens to the stranger none the less. There is a word that explains this: a word the meaning of which we have almost forgotten

Hospitality. That is ingrained in him, a fact which is often the cause of misunderstanding. The stranger will take the display of warmth as a tribute to himself in particular; whence may follow a rude awakening.

We retired as the crowd dispersed, and went to our restaurant. It is on the cheaper part of the front, but has a fine view over the bay to the pinnacled and pearly isle of Murea in the distance. The Chinese, although their cheap eating-houses provide wholesome fare for a hungry man, too often try their hand at what results in a foul apeing of French cookery. The Chinese place we favour is one of the few which serve a mixture of French, Chinese and native dishes. The Chinese and native are the best. The dearer French restaurants and hotels go in too much for rich meat dishes, which are thoroughly unsuitable to the climate, but which the town Frenchman apparently must have. At Lovaina's one gets a good meal, but Lovaina's is too much cluttered up with the tourist element—the kind that stops over for the next boat—so we don't go there much. Even Tehiva has enough of it in the streets.

We drank a bottle of French red wine between us and then went on to the place where we stay the night. We are nearly always able to get a room there, and if we can't the native manager can find one for us.

It is a nice old house, some way along the waterfront in the opposite direction, past the big warehouses and the post office and the bathing-pool. The rooms are large and airy, each with a section of shuttered balcony. A good many white residents live here. The front door is open night and day, and you can bring in anyone you like without being questioned. You may take the room for yourself, but that does not prevent your having a companion in it, who may arrive with you or without you. The place, as I have said, is under native management, which makes for the freedom of style that residents like. There is not much furniture in the rooms, but there is always a big and very comfortable bed, with a scarlet-and-white patchwork counterpane, and an ample mosquito curtain over it. You may find no lock on your door, but we are not afraid of intruders here. Everything is very clean, cleanliness being the Tahitian substitute for godliness. The practical outlook again.

We rested for a couple of hours; in fact, we slept, as one has a right to do at this time of day, although when we are at home we seldom do so. But here in Papeete we could not go trotting about in the mid-day heat, and the unaccustomed wine had made

us sleepy. We rose, much refreshed, about three, dressed ourselves and set out.

We walked along the quay, noting what schooners were in, and keeping in the shade of the trees. The schooners interested us both; we wanted some day to sail in one: Tahitians love travel in their own seas. Tehiva has never been out of Tahiti and I don't see much prospect of her going yet, as I cannot afford to take her anywhere, unless to Murea, which does not appeal, being within view. But we knew the names of the places the schooners came from—the Marquesas Islands, the Paumotu, Rarotonga, Raiatea and others, some of them thousands, some hundreds, of miles away—and we sailed to them in imagination. These schooners are all little vessels, most of them of less than a hundred tons; some have gasoline engines and some have sail only, and all are painted white.

We passed a black, four-masted schooner, a timber-carrier from America, and Tehiva sniffed at this. She knew all about it, and about its crew. Her sense of hospitality did not extend to them; everything must have its limit. They were the lowest of the low, judging by their conduct here, and the lowest girls of the town, girls whom nobody else would touch with a pole, entertained them. I had not quite her abhorrence of these men: although they were as incongruous as the tourist, I could not forget that in their own ports they would be nothing worse than picturesque sailormen, if one did not have close contact with them. The tourist represented something else to me; he represented modern civilisation, and, taken from his background, he was a glaring portent.

From the quay we turned into the market-place, not very lively at this hour. But there were shops, mostly Chinese, and we made a leisurely inspection of them. I bought Tehiva some dress material, for which she bargained vigorously and at great length. There were some white silk shawls, figured with purple flowers and pale green leaves, at which she looked rather lingeringly, but I had to give these the go-by, for the day at least; as an emollient I bought her a silk scarf for her hat. The dress-piece was her due, the scarf was her present. Then we called on the relatives with whom she had been stopping when I first met her. They asked us to stay and eat with them, but we excused ourselves; we did not want much, after a rather large lunch. In Papeete it seems to me that the European, especially the Frenchman, habitually over-eats himself. He has his *déjeuner*, such as we have had, and then he eats as much at dinner in the

evening. In this climate, where one does not need to fortify the body against cold, the system cannot deal with that amount of food. The purpose of much of the food eaten in cold climates is to generate heat in the body, and that is not necessary here. The Tahitian is very temperate in the matter of food. He eats heartily at his chief meal, towards midday, but once hunger is satisfied he makes an end, and if he is not hungry he does not eat.

So, leaving the relatives, we went first of all to our lodging, where we bathed in a large cement pool on the ground floor, and then back to the market-place and to a Chinaman's where we had coffee and raw fish in little bowls. Some people find raw fish an acquired taste; I can't say I did, and I think that the repugnance is due to fancy, like the Englishman's repugnance to frog. Raw fish is eaten with a sauce called *miti*, made from grated coconut and sea water, and this moderates the raw taste of the fish, which becomes very light and digestible. It is often eaten at the beginning of a meal. Only certain kinds of fish are suitable to it. We had the coffee afterwards.

By this time the market-place was alive again, and the wreath-sellers had taken their seats on the kerb of the market-house. I bought Tehiva a wreath as a matter of course. No evening in Papeete is complete without one. She had left her hat in the room, and the wreath of waxy white flowers now took the place of it.

Everybody was freshly dressed for the evening, Europeans in white suits, the native men mostly in coloured shirts and white trousers, the women in muslin frocks. Some girls wore shoes and stockings, others were barefooted. The wine-shops were gathering in their customers, the Chinamen's shops theirs (you could play fan-tan or smoke a pipe in many of them); people were collecting moth-like round the lighted barrows of the sellers of coconuts and water-melon; there was singing and accordion-playing and much quiet merriment. As on the wharf this morning, there was a plethora of girls. Papeete is the hunting-ground of girls from every country district and from most of the outlying islands. All look for men; some work, some live on men, but few are what we should call prostitutes.

There was no sign of the men from the four-masted schooner; their womenkind would take them well out of the way, to escape interference with their orgies. The police are charitable, they are not censors of morals, but they frown on public disturbances, and these affairs are altogether too noisy.

We had now to go to the theatre, a minute's walk away in the quaintly misnamed Rue de Rivoli, which is about as unlike the

Rue de Rivoli as any street on earth can be. It is true that there are locally important buildings in it—the bank, the cathedral, government offices, a club, a hotel, and another theatre at the farther end, but there is hardly a shop in its whole umbrageous length.

Outside our theatre was the small crowd that met there for social reasons, or to listen to the band in the balcony, but did not wish, or had not the money, to go in. The pictures are not very desirable, from the cultured standpoint; but they amuse the natives. The films are often imperfect from wear and tear; the one we saw was of the gunman type. I don't think that such pictures do much harm here, because the people don't take them seriously; they are the strange products of a distant land called America and do not apply to this island world. They may have induced a few urchins to buy toy pistols, but they start no wave of crime—not a ripple, to my knowledge. To Tehiva they are an entertainment, pure and simple; not a vision of the outer world but an escape from reality: she knows that the people on the screen are actors, and she attaches no reality to their behaviour. It is a spectacle, like the spectacle of the tourists, only that the tourists are real people, although so funny. I don't mind sitting it out, because she takes such pleasure in it. She laughs so delightfully in the wrong places—I mean the places where you are not intended to laugh, but where, if you have a sense of humour, you must. She provides an admirable criticism of the popular film, and receives it at, roughly speaking, its true value.

At the conclusion we returned to our lodging discussing the action as we might have discussed the action of a play from Mars. Tehiva had been stimulated, amused, and that was all. Next morning we rose early and visited the market, intensely fresh and newly alive at this hour. The beginning of each day in Papeete market-place is like the beginning of a life with nothing behind it. The past day and the past night seem to have been wiped out. The light, as the sun rose above the mountains, was like the light of the first day on earth.

We drank our coffee and ate our bread at a Chinaman's; then caught our bus for home and the daily round.

March 18th

YESTERDAY was Sunday, and we had a visitor, a Pitcairn Islander.

He is a carpenter and is working at present for a native land-owner, a kilometre or so from here. He comes here often on Sunday mornings and stays to eat with us. His reason for coming is that he likes to talk to someone who can speak English, and I am handy. He was quite frank about this when he first called on me. My own tendency is to avoid people who speak English, but perhaps when I have been here a few years I shall be of his mind.

The Pitcairn Islanders, as most people know, are the descendants of the mutineers of the *Bounty* who married Tahitian women and settled on the island of Pitcairn, more than two thousand miles from Tahiti. Their history is so well known that one need not refer to it, more than to remark that anyone desiring information on the subject cannot do better than read Sir John Barrow's book *The Mutiny of the Bounty*. It is a hundred years old, but does not leave much to be added.

The strangest thing of all about these people is that English is their mother tongue. The term mother tongue, though it has come to mean merely one's own language, has its obvious derivation in the tongue which a child learns from its mother, and that tongue, unless the mother has ceased to speak her own tongue, must necessarily be hers. It may happen that when the child is born in its father's country, it is taught his language from its birth; but that was not the case with the Pitcairn people. Pitcairn was an island on which the mutineers settled with their Tahitian wives; yet English seems to have been the language of these people from the first. If it was not, I cannot imagine how English speech was preserved there, whatever the wishes of John Adams, the patriarch. Here in Tahiti it is the invariable rule when native and Europeans mate that the offspring learn the language of the mother, though they may learn French or English when they are quite small. But on Pitcairn, in defiance of the mother's influence, those English mutineers must have insisted on teaching their children English and ordained that the Tahitian language should be abandoned; and this ruling must have, in the main, prevailed, notwithstanding that most of them came to an early end by violence, through their having most foolishly brought with them mateless Tahitian men; so that

after ten years only one Englishman was left. The strength of character of this survivor must have been enormous, to have preserved the English language and English traditions. It is true that for private use the Pitcairners have a dialect of very debased English with many Tahitian words in it. But simple English is their language; they learn it as children, together with the dialect, and speak it without hesitation.

The one thing in Adams' favour was his possession of a Bible; he could not write (he learned to write later) but he could read. He taught the children to read, and governed his little community on Anglo-Biblical lines. He was a plain seaman of those days, you must remember, but a sense of responsibility must have quickened him, and the violent deaths of his companions may have affected him considerably. But here I am delving into Pitcairn history, contrary to my resolution.

However, it is necessary to remark that the Pitcairners are to this day very religious, which accounted for the presence of my acquaintance in Tahiti. He did not mind religion so much as the restrictions which religion carried with it, particularly the moral restrictions. His sole interest, so far as I can gather, is in women. Not woman or any one woman, but women. He does not appear to have much success with them, but he talks of hardly anything else. He is a trier, his conquests are few and costly, his endeavours strenuous and many. They cost him most of his wages. He is here in the country recuperating financially, for he is a good carpenter and can earn good money in town. He could never live on Pitcairn again, he told me; life was too narrow there; there was too much Bible, too much church service. He is a sad example of too strict a moral upbringing and too strict a moral environment. His spirit was willing, but his flesh would not stand it.

When he came here he could speak very little Tahiti—just a smattering of that pidgin Tahiti which is the *lingua franca* of these seas. He speaks English with a singsong intonation, drawling the words out. You would know at once that it was his mother tongue, but you would wonder what English-speaking country he came from. His vocabulary is very small; one has to use the simplest words and phrases in talking to him. His complexion is pale brown, but there is colour—a distinct red—in his cheeks, such as one rarely sees in a Tahitian half-caste. That may be less from his white blood than from the cool climate of his island. His skin is wrinkled, leathery. He has deep-set, bright, brown eyes, black hair and thick eyebrows.

His nose has a well-raised, slightly aquiline bridge, but it broadens too much at the nostrils to be harmonious; it is half South Sea and half European. He has high cheekbones, hollow cheeks and a large mouth. His forehead recedes a little; so does his chin, but his underjaw is strong enough. There is nothing Tahitian in his appearance except about the nose and eyes. He might at a glance pass for an English countryman from somewhere in the west. Both in appearance and manner he is a bit sawny, rustic. He smiles slowly and widely, but with a twinkle. Yet, mild as he is in look and reality, his brows, beetling and thick, give a curious contradiction to his expression. In certain lights he looks forbidding, formidable. He is certainly no beauty.

Ships between Pitcairn and Tahiti are few and far between, so some years ago the Pitcairners took an enterprising step. They built a schooner of their own. This may not sound much, but it was a big thing. Pitcairn is a tiny isle with a rocky, cliff-bound coast, no beach to speak of and no harbour. There was no shipwright among them, but there was standing timber and they had their carpenters' tools. Most of them are carpenters of varying degree. They designed their ship, they cut down what timber they wanted, sawed it to required lengths, shaped it with adzes and axes and laid down their ship. They built her on a ledge of the iron shore, to which, of course, the material had to be manhandled. All they had then to procure was canvas and rope, which they got, I believe, from a warship. In this schooner my friend came over here. I saw her once in Papeete. She is an astonishing sight, high in the poop like a galleon and with a high bluff bow. Even amidships she stands high out of the water. But she travels the two thousand miles between here and Pitcairn and provides both a means of communication and an outlet for Pitcairn produce. The Pitcairner is now able to trade, and as his little island is very fertile, this is a great advantage to him. When I first looked at his schooner I was inclined to laugh; I did, I remember, smile, but I did not smile when I understood the feat he had accomplished.

My Pitcairner is a bit of a bore; he is so very slow in the uptake compared with the Tahitian; but neither of us grudges him his welcome. I can never forget that he helped to build that schooner (if one can call it a schooner) and sail her across the ocean. Here mere aspect would have terrified the stoutest white sailor. Her sails and rigging, the whole cut of her—if you could

only see it. And then you would have that sense that I had, of the ludicrous overpowered by the magnificent.

March 23rd

WE are just home from a visit to Tehiva's parents. We went by the bus yesterday morning, and returned to-day before noon. We do this about once in three months.

It is a pleasant drive and very varied. Considering the limitations of tropical scenery and the prevalence here of the coconut tree, Tahiti can command a surprising range of variations on the same theme. Mountains, the palms, the beach and the sea are its main constituents, but as you travel the coastal road they form continually into new and pleasing combinations. There are other features, of course; huts, houses, streams, banana clumps, mango and other kinds of fruit trees, forest trees and bush, but the four first-named are the elements which give the character to the whole. Every minute you open out new prospects; sometimes you are out of sight of the ocean, with palms on either side; the next minute you are on the edge of it, with a clear view to the reef and the strip of ocean, all of the ocean ever to be seen from the shore. At most times the sea inside the reef is like a lake, so calm. There are many spits of land and inshore islets shutting out the farther coast. Coconut trees loll over the water, and the *purao*, the commonest of Tahitian bush trees and something like the sycamore, shades the beach in places where there are no palms. You can seldom see more than a hundred yards ahead along the road, and owing to its circularity you are always getting the mountains from a different angle. You never have anywhere that long view which becomes so tiresome on a journey.

We passed a village or hamlet in every mile or so. Some of the houses were like mine, others were entirely of coconut leaf, and there were larger houses of wood, some with shingle, others with corrugated-iron, roofs. The latter were certainly no embellishment, but the roofs were painted and the foliage screened them partially. These larger houses were mostly built by people who had made money out of vanilla. Those with iron roofs are very hot inside and cannot be in any way more comfortable than the native style of dwelling. They are an instance of the corrupting power of money on a primitive people. Money makes them want houses that cost money, whether they are

good or not. Our own lower classes, since money has begun to trickle down to them, show similar tendencies. They will buy a thing because it is costly, and for no other reason.

Schools were conspicuous. All the larger villages have schools; sometimes there is a school between two villages. Tahitian children learn to read and write, in their own language and in French, though the amount of oral French they acquire is small. What else they learn I don't know, but it is not enough to be noticeable. This is not a climate to encourage learning. Most have good natural intelligence, and a few boys show excellent mental ability; these sometimes finish their schooling in France and enter professions or the Government service. The Tahitian is quick enough to learn, but he learns what he likes, not necessarily what the schools can teach him. In mental characteristics and capacity he is very like the Maori. He is clever with his tongue and with his hands; he can learn to play chess with an ease which has astonished many a chess-player and embarrassed his teacher; but he has not the European's plodding power; he is too volatile and tires of effort. His one great intellectual art is oratory; and this speaks volumes for his defects and his qualities. Oratory is spontaneous; it is an effort of brain and imagination which has not to be pursued. I cannot imagine a Tahitian, however brilliant, spending years upon a book or other work of art. But he can work hard enough to pass an examination if the supposed reward is great enough. After that his natural gifts may keep him afloat.

When the bus stopped in Tehiva's village her father met us. He was wearing a white coat over his *pareo*. This was for the occasion. I, too, was properly attired in the white suit of formality. In Papeete he has to wear trousers, as the *pareo*, most absurdly, is barred there. This is as silly as if we barred the kilt in Edinburgh, for the *pareo* is nothing but a kilt.

Tamaro is his name. He greeted us with a lively smile but with no display, rather with an imposed restraint. He shook hands with me and with his daughter. Tehiva kissed him on the cheek. He is a tall, upstanding man, muscular and strongly framed and with no superfluous flesh. His hair is still quite black; but for a small, thin, black moustache his face is shaven. He has strong features, deeply graved, which seem to make his smile the pleasanter. Tahitians vary a lot in colour; some are pure olive, some chocolate, and there are all the shades between. His skin has a lustre; none of that dullness which one sees in the skin of the Indian. His features, like those of all Tahitians, are slightly

flattened, but he is far more like a European than he is like a black man. He has not a trace of the negro's heaviness of countenance; that blurred, half-bestial grossness. The Tahitian male when he reaches forty grows more European in cast than when he is young. His racial origin is still unsolved: the Asiatic theory will not hold, for he is more European in every way than he is Asiatic, except where climate has affected him. A European can get on terms with him without difficulty; their minds work along the same lines. I have looked at a Tahitian and thought that if I could change his pigmentation and sharpen his features a little I could make him indistinguishable from the higher type of white man. I have sometimes been teased by this anomaly of a white man peeping through the skin of a brown. And it is not mixed blood that is the cause of this; that does not produce the same effect at all.

One could see the mixed blood in his wife, who came from the house to welcome us. (The mixed blood shows "mixed" when it does show: one does not get that separate effect of a European underneath, which is so perplexing.) Apart from this she is an older edition of Tehiva; very little lighter than her daughter, though she may have been when she was young (the women darken with age), but much lighter than her husband. Quite why the women should be mostly lighter than the men I do not know; it may be due to texture of the skin. Hiapo, Tehiva's mother, is buxom and comfortable-looking. She has a great quantity of hair with a tinge of bronze in it, and was wearing it in two heavy plaits reaching to her waist. Tehiva wears her hair as occasion suits her: sometimes she wears it like this; sometimes she coils the plaits on her head or neck; sometimes she wears it loose over back and shoulders. At least an hour of each day is taken up with combing and dressing it. This day it hung in plaits; at home in the evening it is nearly always loose; when she goes to town it is coiled at her neck. Hiapo's eyes are now the most striking part of her; a Tahitian woman keeps the beauty of her eyes almost to the last, and Hiapo will have that beauty for many years longer. Her hair, too, usually survives, thanks to the coconut oil; and so does her melodious voice. Her teeth do not wear as well as one would expect. As for the rest, she either thins or fattens, like women anywhere.

The house stands back from the road, and is reached by a natural footpath between coconut trees. These leave just space for the house. I keep calling it a house, but the word is misleading, perhaps: I am translating the word *fare*, which means

house of any kind: I do much of my thinking, you see, in the Tahiti language: it comes even more readily to my tongue than English, but that is not only because I speak it more often but because it is so much easier to speak. Its opulence in vowels makes it run off the tongue so smoothly; one does not have to scramble over crowded consonants. However, I was speaking of the house. It is what we should call a cabin, having only one room and being entirely built of coconut leaf on a framework of posts and poles of the *purao*. The roof is like my own roof, but the walls are of single plaited fronds, some of which can be opened outwards to form windows. These fronds need renewing every twelvemonth, but there is no difficulty about that. They are held up on props when the windows are open. You can open up the whole length of the house in this way, or close the whole length if you wish; in fact, let as much draught in as you desire. The eaves of the thatch catch most of the rain. At each end is a door and a thatched porch which protects the wall as the eaves protect the side walls. A high wind may make things unpleasant, but there are plenty of spare mats which can be rigged on the walls.

The house is about thirty feet in length and fifteen in breadth, and all along one side of it (within) is a staked platform, filled in with pounded earth to make a smooth surface. This is the *paepae*, where the family sleep on mats. Its thirty feet allow plenty of elbow room, if not the privacy to which we are used in our sleeping arrangements. Tahitian children sleep just as the birds sleep, and I doubt if they know much of parental intimacies. If they do they probably accept them as children accept everything. As for the elder ones—well, sex and its functions are made no secret of here, and are consequently not much thought about. The boys and girls slip off to the beaches and the covers with little premeditation. In that respect the Pitcairner in Tahiti makes a disagreeable contrast with the Tahitian. Poor —, with his women on the brain, pays the penalty of his upbringing.

Tamaro is a poor man, as natives go. His town relatives, not to mention many of his neighbours, are obviously much better off. But he has at least his bit of land, which not all natives have.

There are two grown-up daughters, both of them younger than Tehiva and neither more than twenty, and a son of about fifteen. There is another son, the eldest of the family, who is now mate of a schooner. He was absent; the daughters and the younger son were at home.

I took a walk with Tamaro round his land and we discussed the price of copra, the nuisance of rats, which climb the trees and gnaw holes in the nuts, and other matters of interest to the husbandman. He had lately ringed his trees with pieces of smooth tin, which stopped the rats from climbing them but did not get rid of the rats who were already up there and who now lived in the trees, passing from one to another by the overlapping branches. I had found my trees ringed when I bought the plantation and the rats still taking their toll, but I think a good many came down and never got back again.

When we returned to the house the midday meal was ready. Tamaro took off his coat and I took off mine. A large mat was spread on the floor, which was of earth, well stamped and scrupulously swept. On the mat was a table-cloth of banana leaf, and the food, wrapped in banana leaf, was laid upon it.

We ate partly from bowls. There was squid, very tender and sweet, a sucking-pig, breadfruit, *fei*, sweet potatoes and taro, followed by a pudding called *poi*, made from pawpaw. This pudding, which Tehiva often makes, is much to my liking, and I am not fond of pudding as a rule. Manioka is another very good sweet; you would never guess that it was arrowroot. What the manufacturer of arrowroot does to rob it of its unique flavour I cannot think. Of the vegetables, I like taro best; that, too, has a flavour entirely its own, though all three of the foods I have specially mentioned have, to my palate, an elusive something in common: a richness made exquisite by refinement, for they are not rich in the ordinary sense.

Coconut sauce accompanied most of our meal, but was dished separately, so that one could use it or not. I ate as the others did, with my fingers. I could have had a plate and a knife and fork, but as a guest I chose to dispense with them. Besides which, it gave more ease all round if I behaved as a member of the family.

After the meal we lay down on the *paepae* and let a cool breeze fan us. Later, leaving the father and mother at home, we went out and up to a valley where we gathered oranges, which in that district are abundant. They are not tempting to look at, being small and mottled with brown, but for delicate sweetness I know no orange to approach them. All Tahiti oranges have this mottling, and, for this reason perhaps, are not exported. At the same time we gathered wreaths, and returned all of us like brides decked for a wedding. I wore my wreath on my hat,

which, for a man, was the correct thing to do. With a gardenia stuck behind my ear I was the complete Tahitian.

They are jolly girls, Tehiva's sisters, and the boy is bright, good-natured, as masculine as a boy could be, but owning his sisters' seniority. He treated me with mingled freedom and respect; there was no constraint in our party: I could talk, think and act just as if I were with a party of my own people. But there is another side to that matter. It is easy enough, as I have said, to get on terms with the Tahitian: you have only not to be self-conscious: but things crop up in the course of ones, acquaintance with this people which expose disconcerting differences.

I had rights over Tehiva's sisters. Marital rights. Tehiva had told me about this long ago, in an especially frank and communicative moment. It was an old custom, in abeyance but not abolished—like some of our laws, which no one can prevent being revived if anyone demands it.

The custom was this: that if a man married the eldest daughter of a family, he had rights over all the younger daughters, even after they were married. The husband of the second daughter had similar rights over the daughters junior to his wife, and so on. Tehiva's sisters being both of them younger than she and both of marriageable age, I was entitled to them on demand.

I questioned Tehiva closely about this. Would her sisters object? I asked. Certainly not, answered Tehiva. Although the custom had fallen out of practice, they knew all about it and recognised its force. They would comply quite readily, she said. I could lie with them in their father's house.

I then asked Tehiva what she would have to say to it. She replied that she would raise no objection. But would she mind? I persisted: she might not formally object, but would she disapprove, and signify her disapproval in some other way? At this Tehiva smiled, not very enigmatically, and said that she would not be pleased. I gathered that there would be serious repercussions and that I should be most unwise to invite them.

But there it was. And it was rather queer to lie down beside Tehiva in the *fare* that night, knowing that either of her sisters, not twelve feet from me, was mine upon demand; and that each knew it. The father and mother slept at one end of the *paepae*. Tehiva and I at the other; the girls slept next to us, near the middle, and the boy between them and his parents. Thus we had slept when I first came to stay with the family. A lamp, turned very low, stood on the floor.

I had had confirmation of Tehiva's statement from an old Englishman living in the next village to ours, on whom I call occasionally. Soon after his marriage he had gone on a visit to his wife's parents, and had been told that he might then and there sleep with any of her younger sisters. Although he had been twelve years in the South Seas, he had never before heard of this custom, and had been too taken aback to make use of his liberty. He thought afterwards that this was for the best. His opinion was that his wife would have turned the tables on him, and that the cause of the gradual disuse of the custom was the women's growing objection to it, which they showed by retaliatory action.

He is very bad with the *fée fée*, this old man. The *fée fée* is elephantiasis. Both his legs are an enormous, horrifying size, and he has difficulty in getting about. He can walk, but not any distance. Periodically he has his legs tapped, but they soon swell up again. He has a very large family, some of them middle-aged, and as none of them, not even his wife, shows any sign of the disease, it does not appear to be contagious or transmissible. The natives, however, have a theory that it is transmissible in the urine, and that *fée fée* people can and do take vengeance in this way, by polluting the food of their enemies and inoculating them with the disease.

It is worse in some districts than in others, and is not bad about here. The island of Murea is a hotbed of it, but wherever one goes one sees here and there a native suffering from it. It is less common among Europeans, and I never saw a Chinaman with it. Women have it, but not as badly as men. It attacks mainly the legs, but it may later invade the hands and arms. In an advanced stage it turns a man into a monstrosity. It is the one glaring disfigurement of human life here, the one blot on these islands.

March 30th

I HAVE been swinging the axe to-day. Not splitting up coconuts for copra, but working in the bush—or what was bush before I planted coconuts and vanilla in it. It is still to a large degree bush, for vanilla and young coconuts need much shade. Entire shade, however, is not good for them, and coconuts need less of it year by year. So, as the bush grows, like the weeds, at a

tremendous pace, I have, every few months, to cut back and let the sun and air in.

I know no exercise more exhilarating than axe-work, if one can take one's own time and not overdo it. Rowing presses it hard, but there is a monotony about rowing which axe-work in standing timber does not have. Each little job presents a fresh little problem; and there is the pleasure of solving it, the pleasure of the work and the subsequent pleasure of seeing what you have accomplished. Fine, chest-expanding, muscle-stretching exercise as rowing unquestionably is, it is exercise and nothing more.

I love the feel of the sharp blade cutting through the wood, and the moment when bough or tree cracks to its fall. Another gap of blue among the green overhead, another ray of light let in for my nurselings. I love the physical feat of keeping my balance on one branch while I aim strokes at another, for that is not so easy. Life in Tahiti is a little too easy for me sometimes; my Northern blood can assert itself. Tehiva comes to look at me occasionally, or to call me to food, for I cannot always hear her when my axe is ringing: she understands why I have to do this work, but she does not understand the pleasure I take in it, or the vigour with which I attack it. "*Haere maru*," she will say. "Go easy. You are pouring with sweat." It is hard work: why do I go at it as if it were a sport? But it gives me new life to feel the sweat starting out of me; I love to feel it pouring down me in a stream, the salt taste of it, its coolness as it dries on me. An additional pleasure which I find in this work is in the setting of vivid leaves, of light and shade; the gold, the sun-shot green, the patches of blue, with myself completely enclosed in all this. I am a bit of a solitary, you see. I could not get on if I could not be solitary sometimes, and there is a peculiar solitariness, solitude with an emphasis, when the view is restricted to what is close around you. That green bush closes me in like a caress. This is no exaggeration. It is like the caress of a lover with the world shut out. I don't mind Tehiva coming to see me, but I should not like her to stay. She never does.

Man is so various. To be happy he must satisfy the various urges and not imagine that any are incompatible. They are not, if he does not mix them up in his mind and think that if he is this he must not be that, that if he does one thing he must not do the other. He can do everything and be everything he has a mind to, if he remembers that he is a diversity as well as a unity. One of man's many errors has been his fetish-worship of consistency.

True consistency is natural and needs no forcing: man's diversity will hang together of itself if only he will allow it. I try to satisfy all my urges which do not harm myself or other people, and if they seem conflicting I overlook it: I know that they are not really conflicting, because when they have had their way they are good friends and leave me in peace till the next time.

While the practical part of my mind is intent on the job when I am clearing or indeed doing any work in the plantation, the imaginative part goes ranging. To-day I thought back to the days when I was a boy in South Africa, with a brief English public-school period behind him. I have travelled a long way since then, in body and spirit. What was I looking for—a home for them? Surely I have found it here. I have never been anywhere where my instincts had such freedom, my diversity so much satisfaction, where I felt so much a harmony.

Perhaps I took particular pleasure in to-day's work because for a couple of days I was laid up with rheumatism. It attacked my knee, and for a time was painful. Tehiva got rid of it with massage. Most Tahitian women know something of massage; a few are experts in it. Tehiva is not one of these, but she knows enough to treat a case of rheumatism. The experts in massage inherit their knowledge. It passes from mother to daughter, as general medical knowledge passes from father to son, never going out of the family. Many of the native doctors are very clever, but not so clever as to think they can cure everything. When the case appears to require surgery they send the patient to a European doctor. But they perform remarkable cures, from what I have heard, and some of them have great reputations. These doctors move from place to place, to let the sick everywhere have the benefit of their services. There is no fee (a fee would invalidate the treatment), but it is customary to give a present if the treatment works. The presents are usually in kind—one is not expected to give money—so that native doctors never become wealthy, and are sometimes as poor as the poorest. Plantation and garden produce are a favourite form of gift, and the doctor has often trouble in disposing of it, unless he has a very large family or a great many relatives. Nothing, however, would induce him to amend his medical etiquette and accept a fee. The theory is that medical knowledge is preserved for the general good and, in consequence, cannot be sold. That anyone should grow rich on human disease and infirmity does not seem proper to the Tahitian. A very naive idea, of course. But we must be indulgent to the primitive ideas of a primitive people.

One does not somehow expect to have rheumatism in this climate, but it is not, as a fact, uncommon here. Nor—what seems stranger—are chest diseases. Walk through a village in the early morning and you will hear many coughs. Not all the coughers, certainly, have chest disease, but it is very likely that one or two of them have. Consumption finishes many of the country girls who lead a fast life in Papeete. Syphilis, introduced by the white man, is less than it used to be. The only other disease I know of here is leprosy, which is rare among native Tahitians and came from Hawaii. I have seen only one leper, but there is a leper settlement. This leper I knew well, without knowing that he was developing leprosy. When he was at all heated his face used to redden and glisten like roasting beef, and I began to notice a thickening of his features, which gave him a leonine appearance. The next thing I heard of him was that he had been taken to the leper settlement.

No, human life is by no means free of disease here. As to cancer, it may exist, but I never heard of it. There is one smallish hospital, but no lunatic asylum: insanity is almost non-existent. Suicide is unknown among the natives. On the whole I should say that there is less serious disease here than in any European country, and as regards mental stability there is no comparison. Crimes of passion and violence are infrequent, and can mostly be traced to Spanish-American blood. Tahitian life is founded on sane principles, and its general conditions produce very little of that misery which causes suicide, crime and insanity among us. The Tahitian is not an animal bred for industrial purposes and trained in false ideas to make him subservient. He is not put into a strait-jacket and made to walk a chalk line from the cradle to the grave to make his country great and "prosperous." He is not swindled out of his birthright as a living creature. He is not drained of his manhood to gorge millionaires. He is not nailed into his place like a rivet to uphold a fantastic edifice which will not even make picturesque ruins.

The European can rise higher than the Tahitian, but he can sink immeasurably lower. It makes me wince to see the common white man beside the common native; physically, mentally and morally he is the native's inferior. It is not his fault: degeneration has followed degradation, as nothing can prevent it from doing.

April 5th

LAST month-ended the wet season. April, May and June are, I think, the best months here. The trade wind begins to blow steadily now and tempers the sun, and the earth is still fresh with the rains. By July one notices a dryness, and there is an increasing sultriness till the rains start again in October or November. But April, May and June, although they are the beginning of what goes here by the name of winter (the evenings, mornings and nights are certainly cooler then, and the average of temperature perhaps lower)—April, May and June are more like spring than any other season of the year. Everything has a sparkle, people go about with spring in their faces, and there is a general sensation of renaissance.

Last night there was a dance at the house of the landowner where my Pitcairn Islander is working. We were notified of it and went. A formal invitation was not necessary: indeed, it would have been inadvisable, for this was not an ordinary dance; it was a *hulahula*, and the *hulahula* is illegal. I almost write that it is not permitted, but this would be untrue: it is permitted but not sanctioned. Long ago the missionaries banned it, and the French have never raised the ban. The missionaries banned nearly all the people's sports and entertainments, but there was an excuse for their objection to the *hulahula*. By Christian standards of morality it is an immoral dance. The tourists see a corrupt version of it, but you must live in a country district to see the real thing. And if there is any doubt about your judgment you will not see it even then. Everyone would hear about it but you, for if you complained to the gendarme there would be a row. He would have to take notice, and he would see that there were no more *hulahulas* in his district, in case authority came down on him.

In the present case the gendarme knew all about the affair, but as there was no one here at all likely to report it, he let it take place and said nothing. He knew that there would be no drinking, no indecorum; the scene of it was guarantee of that. The landowner is a chief, royally descended, a son of the district governor, and himself of good repute. All district governors—magistrates as we should call them—are native, and are usually chosen by the French for their hereditary prestige. The Tahitian is still very conservative about whom he respects and obeys. Once a West Indian negro was appointed Governor of Tahiti.

He was highly educated, but the experience was not a success. It was useless to tell the people that he was a Frenchman; he was only too obviously a black man—a nigger, which was one grade above an animal. It was a sad blow for French bureaucracy, which thought it was doing such a graceful thing in appointing a man of colour to govern coloured people.

The landowner, as I have said, is royally descended. He is partly English, but grandson of a Pomare and nephew of the last Queen. He went to school in Sydney and speaks good English besides French, but is native to the bone. He lives on his share of the family land and keeps up the style of a native chieftain. It is a very unassuming style: no idle retainers; he could not afford them: he is simply a father to those who live on his land. He does not give them much in the way of wages, but they all have enough to eat and drink and clothe them, and advice and help when they need them. At night they can assemble on his veranda, talk and sing, play cards and look at picture-books, and hold conversation with him. He does not have to keep them at a distance in order to command their respect.

We arrived at his house about eight o'clock. His grandfather, the Englishman, had built it; it has been added to, and is now rambling and irregular. It has a long front and two back wings of unequal length. The wings are of weatherboard and thatch; the front is partly of coral and partly of wood, painted white to match the coral, and is part shingled and part thatched. Coral makes a good building material and has a very clean appearance. The space formed by the two wings makes a yard, and there are verandas on the three sides of it, in addition to the front veranda. The depth of the house throughout is only of one room; room doors open on verandas, which serve as passages. There is one inside passage, from the front door; one walks through it to the back veranda. This was what we did on our arrival, as everyone was at the back. I and an elderly Frenchman, a neighbouring planter, were the only Europeans present, and our host invited me to a chair beside him. Tehiva sat with his wife and her women on the floor. All the rest of the company sat on the floor. The verandas gave them plenty of accommodation.

At a word from the chief the dancers rose up from the company and took their places in the yard. They formed in two lines, *vis-à-vis*, men in one, women in the other. Then, without music, the dance began. I was much interested, never having seen it in its purity.

It is 'scarcely a dance in the European sense. There were movements backwards and forwards, but very little choric movement of the feet: it was a dance of attitudes and gestures. To describe it in detail would be like an anatomical description: it would give no more idea of it than an anatomical description of the human body would give of the living form. It was ballet, in that it was pantomimic and dramatic and that each row of dancers moved in unison. My first thought, as it commenced, was of the African belly dance, which I had seen in Egypt; but I soon perceived that it differed greatly in spirit from this, though there was some superficial resemblance. The belly dance is dull, unless you like technique by itself, for it has little but its technique to recommend it. The best one can say of it is that it is a conscientious rendering of the emotions inspired by the sexual orgasm. The Tahitian dance has the same subject, but the treatment is altogether different. It has a gaiety of spirit, an irresistible humour, which aerates and sublimates the theme. In other words, it is art, and the technique is, as technique should be, inconspicuous—until one reviews it, when one realises that it is an achievement of technique. Watching it for the first time, it all appears so natural as to be spontaneous. You have in front of you a body of people, men and women, exquisitely mimicking something which you thought could not be mimicked without offence.

At the last a man and a woman performed alone, and then the dance took another character. There was poetry in the movements of the pair. Each was a finished actor, and acted as if they two were alone in the world—as if they were the first man and woman. They danced for about five minutes, the woman ever delaying, as a woman does, to prolong and heighten the climax, yet shivering with her own restraint; the man electric, taut as a drawn bow, poised and eager as a spear. He advanced, he was repulsed; she invited but to evade him. Her body was a shuddering enticement, yet she ruled the situation. At length she surrendered, and the finale was a storm of attained desire. But the dancers did not make bodily contact. There was no bodily contact at any time. That would have brought the performance down with a crash to the plane of mere realistic acting. As it was, it was poetry; the poetry of nature. There was no romantic sentiment about it, and I can understand the missionaries disapproving of it. It put beauty where they chose to see foulness and ugliness.

There was an interval, and then another troop came on. The whole show lasted about an hour.

There were no refreshments, except for the dancers, who were given green coconuts. Afterwards we sat on and talked for a while; then the company gradually dispersed, and Tehiva and I said goodnight and went home.

It is an ungenerous reflection, but I wish that the Tahitian had continued to develop his dramatic powers, instead of being satisfied to take what his ancestors left him. What I saw last night is probably hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years old. In admiring the performers I found myself forgetting the creators, and overlooking the fact that the performance was little more than one of racial memory. In the race and in the creators lay most of its merits. Every movement and gesture had been bred into the performers.

April 11th

YESTERDAY evening I went to see the old Englishman whose legs are so bad with the *fée-fée*. Tioti, the natives call him, his Christian name being George. The only consonants in this language are f, h, m, p, r, t and v, and no consonant can follow another without a vowel between. In adopting a foreign word the native naturalises it promptly, so that one hears no painful struggles with pronunciation. Often it is only after acquaintance with it that one recognises the word's origin.

Tehiva was attending a sick neighbour; the women take it in turns when there is any nursing to be done; and as she is not very friendly with the old man's wife, it seemed a good opportunity for me to visit him. He is always so manifestly glad to see me that I reproach myself for not going oftener; but I hate his legs.

He is seventy-five and has lived more than fifty years in the South Pacific. He is rather loquacious, from a natural propensity to talk and from having few visitors, more than from the garrulity of age. After a while he tires me by the sheer volume of his talk, just as a museum or a picture-gallery tires me: the exhibits may be excellent, but there are too many of them all together for me to digest. His talk is almost entirely of his South Sea experiences: his English home and his short life in the merchant service seem all but forgotten. He was an apprentice, and deserted his ship to follow a gold rush somewhere. Usually

he has some funny tale to tell, among the rest ; last night it was of a German anthropologist who went to the Marquesas Islands with the theory that the cause of cannibalism was the want of meat. He pointed to the Maoris, known cannibals, who had no flesh food in their country till Captain Cook introduced the pig. He said that all the South Sea people had at one time been cannibals because there was no flesh food in their islands, and that as soon as they had flesh food they stopped being cannibals. He declared that, despite all arguments to the contrary, flesh was an important part of man's natural diet, and that his canine teeth were evidence of this. The Marquesans had been cannibals until quite recently, and there were rumours of cannibalism in remote parts of the country still. The German scoffed at them. He went inland to study the Marquesans. The Marquesans ate him.

You may not think that a funny story. I do. The sense of humour is, more than any other sense, idiosyncratic. It is governed by individual temperament and constitution. In this case any horror I might feel at the fate of the German is overwhelmed by its perfect aptness.

This old fellow's talks of the outlying islands always give me a hankering for them, not just to visit them but to live in and know them. I don't care for merely visiting places: I want intimacy or nothing. I hate tourism of any sort. But I suppose all these islands would be very different from what they were in his time. His time would be that of Louis Becke. He remembers a queer French painter in the Marquesas who used to drink absinthe and smoke opium. He has no recollection of the painter's name, but I think it must have been Gauguin.

He talks a lot about the Paumotus also. These are an archipelago of atolls. An atoll must be the queerest thing on the face of the waters. It is like the rim of a vast submarine crater, only it is not volcanic, it is of coral. Inside is a lagoon, sometimes thirty miles long and fifteen wide, but the width of the land is no more than a hundred to three hundred yards, and its height from three to twelve feet above sea level. From the air it must have the appearance of a gigantic noose flung carelessly upon the ocean. Its windward side is bare reef, but coconut trees grow on its lee side, where the people live. The people are very hardy, although formerly their sole diet was fish and coconuts.

The old man was a trader in various parts until he married and settled down in Tahiti. Trading in the Paumotus was not very safe in his day. The natives used to raid ships when they saw

an opportunity, to get trade-goods for nothing. They killed the crews but did not eat them. All that has passed away, and nowadays the South Seas are safer, I should think, than England—unless you run foul of a cyclone, but that is a less probable event than your running foul of a car on an English road.

He made money out of vanilla, and now has enough to live on without doing anything, which is fortunate for him, as there is not much he can do. It was he who advised me to have a try with vanilla. He was an expert curer as well as planter. Few natives troubled to learn curing, but left that to the Chinamen, who did it badly, though there was always a high price for well-cured vanilla. He was no fool, this old man. He came here with nothing and knowing nothing but what he had learned at sea, and he made a success of everything he turned his hand to. He studied everything, and enjoyed himself at the same time. He got on well with the women. Now he sits most of the day in a chair with his legs up. He wears trousers specially made for him, but they do not hide the trunk-like thickness of his shanks or what were once his ankles. He wears shoes but no socks, and one can see the heavy folds and creases of the flesh between his shoes and his trousers. An ordinary swollen limb, however great the swelling may be, has a temporary appearance; the horridness of this disease is the appearance of indurated lifelong deformity, the suggestion, not of disease, but of something abominably unnatural. An ordinary swollen leg is still a human leg; these legs were not human, nor were they so much like the legs of an elephant that one could think of him with an elephant's legs. If one could have, it would not have been so bad.

He smokes continually and reads a great many newspapers from San Francisco and elsewhere. What his thoughts are when he has nothing to read, God knows. His expression is usually cheerful when I come on him, his eyes are still very clear and bright. His pale, clear complexion and white beard make him look like an old clergyman, but the impish sparkle of his eyes contradicts that impression. When he talks you would think he spoke English every day; he may speak it once a month, perhaps. His married life has not been very happy, I believe: Tehiva tells me so: he does not complain; but one can see that he is rather neglected. No, I ought not to say that he made a success of everything, or that he studied everything sufficiently. He is an odd mixture.

His wife is more often out of the house than in it; she is his junior by many years. His children are, all but one, married. The exception is a boy of sixteen, who recently stole a thousand francs from him and ran off to Papette. That was the only time I found him manifestly unhappy. He would have given the boy money, he said, and I believed him, for his elder children get what they ask for, in reason, from him: he had tried to teach the boy English honesty, and I think it was the fact that the boy remained Tahitian that hurt him most. For the Tahitian thinks that family property is common property, and it was a standing grievance of these children that their father in his old age did not divide his property among them. He was too old to enjoy it: why did he hang on to it when they could enjoy it and provide for him? But although he might have been the gainer if he had parted with it—he might have been better loved and better tended—he was far too English to dream of such a thing. The idea shocked him, and it shocked him to think that his children—*his* children—could entertain it. He expected them to be English because he was English: he could not take into account the influence of their mother and the influence of their social environment. The root of his trouble was that after fifty odd years of South Sea life he remained so obstinately English as to be an alien in his own home.

This, however one looks at it, was a misfortune. A man who settles here should be either a very strong or a very adaptable man.

Sometimes I wish I had a child; at other times I am glad that there is no prospect of one. I think I am adaptable; I am intelligent enough to see that the children of a Tahitian mother must be Tahitian, unless the father has exceptional strength of character: but what father does not wish his children to be like him? It is involuntary, instinctive, whatever reason may say. Therefore I think that every marriage of this kind where there are children must be a disappointment, even in those rare cases where the dominating character of the father has left its indelible stamp, for it is never so strong as he would wish it to be.

Tehiva would like to have children, and we do nothing to prevent them. Childless Tahitian couples are common, but the cause is always sterility, and many of them adopt children. I am not sure that I would not as soon do that. They would be mine as a dog is mine, but I should have no sense of paternity in them. One can be very fond of a dog without even covertly wishing him to be like oneself. In fact, the less like oneself a dog is, the better one likes him.

April 19th

I HAVE had a funny experience. It shows what imagination can do.

The other morning I woke, slipped out of the blanket and sat on the edge of the bed. Tehiva was still asleep: I wake first as a rule and light the fire for her to make the coffee. I stretched myself and continued sitting for a moment or two, when I noticed that my feet, side by side, were not exactly alike. The bones of the left foot did not stand out so clearly as those of the right. The difference was slight, but I could not remember that there had always been this difference in the two feet, though I know that our corresponding members are not always perfectly alike. Examining my feet more closely, I made sure that neither my eyes nor the light were deceiving me, and I then noticed a puffiness about the left ankle. I moved the foot about; there was no pain in it, nor even stiffness; but I did not like the look of it.

I swung my feet back on the bed and woke Tehiva.

"Look at my foot," I said. "What is the matter with it?"

She sat up and rubbed her eyes.

"Which foot?" she asked.

"Why," I answered, "can't you see? The left foot."

She bent over it, felt it, and compared the two.

"It looks fat," she said. "Not fatter than mine, but fatter than the other. A very little only. I think something has bitten you. Probably a spider."

"There's no mark that I can see," I said.

"He might not have left any mark," she replied. "They don't always." She eyed me. "What is the matter? It seems to be nothing much, whatever it is. Does it hurt?"

I told her that I could not feel the smallest ache in it.

"Then why do you look so serious?" she asked.

"I don't like the look of it," I said. "Suppose it is the *fiefée*?"

She stared at me and burst out laughing. "What a thing to suppose!"

"Well," I said, "I have never before had one foot bigger than the other."

"I expect you have, lots of times," she answered, and added quickly: "You had, not a month ago. Your ankle swelled when you had the rheumatism. Not much, but just about as much as the other has swelled now. It went down when the

swelling in your knee went down. This is very likely an effect of the rheumatism."

I could not see how rheumatism in the other leg could make this ankle swell.

"Rheumatism flies from one part to another," she answered my objection. "You may be getting rheumatism in this foot now."

"I hope I'm not," I said, "but I'd rather it were rheumatism than the *féeefée*."

"Don't talk about the *féeefée*," she chid me. "If you get that into your head you will have the *féeefée*. I have seen lots of people whose feet swelled, but it had nothing to do with the *féeefée*. Are you sure that nothing stung you yesterday, or that you haven't strained it somehow?"

I remembered something. "I did give it a slight twist the day before yesterday," I said.

"Well, there you are. You silly!"

I had begun to feel rather ashamed of myself as she surveyed me with an excusable glint of amusement in her eyes.

"Anyhow," she went on, "it is quite likely that both your feet will get bigger. Haven't you noticed that the feet of most Tahiti people are much bigger than white people's feet? It is because they don't wear shoes. You often go without shoes now, so your feet will get big in the same way. Your other foot is bigger than it used to be, although you haven't noticed it. I remember that it was thinner before you started going without shoes."

Considering it, I came to the conclusion that it was bigger—not much, but a little.

"But why," I said, "should one foot swell more than the other?"

"Why, my dear," answered Tehiva, laughing again, "haven't you just now remembered that you gave your foot a twist the day before yesterday?"

I felt more foolish than ever. I had to tell her that I was afraid I wasn't fully awake yet. I was awake all right, though, even if my mind wasn't functioning normally.

I kissed Tehiva and got up.

Later in the morning, when I was in the plantation, I examined my feet very carefully. It was true, as she had said, that my right foot *was* a little bigger than it used to be—fleshier—the bones of the ankles and the toes were not outlined so sharply. Unquestionably the left foot was still bigger, and puffy about the ankle, but the twist I had given it would account for that.

The next morning, before Tehiva was awake, I examined the foot again. The ankle was less puffy, and from the instep forward there was a subsidence. I noticed a very slight stiffness now. The effect of the sprain.

On the following morning there was hardly any difference between my left foot and my right. So now I am at my ease again. I must admit that I was not *quite* easy until this morning.

Why should I have at once fallen into a panic and imagined that I had the *fée-fée*? There was nothing in the appearance of the foot to suggest this. I think it was from my visit to the old Englishman. I thought of his dreadful legs till I fell asleep, and I thought of them when I woke in the morning. They must have got on my brain a bit. I must take myself in hand and not give way to this, or I shall simply be encouraging the disease.

I think I shall stop going about without shoes. I don't like the idea of my feet getting big, from whatever cause, and they are bound to enlarge and spread if I go barefooted. It is all very well, but I have to wear shoes sometimes, and I don't want to be forced into outsizes. Tehiva's feet in shoes are the one uncomely part of her, and native men look awful sights in them. I have been getting more and more into the habit of not wearing shoes, and once or twice I have cut my feet. I don't know if one can get tetanus here, but I should think it very likely in such a rich soil. Anyhow, the risk is not worth running, with the inconvenience of occasional cuts thrown in, for the easily lost comfort of bare feet. A patch of rough ground when you are not prepared for it quickly robs you of the comfort.

I have had a lesson in imaginary fears. I may even have had more than that. I have an idea that fear has often a specific object other than its ostensible object. The ostensible object in this case was seen to be illusory; but the result of my fear is that now I am going to give up going barefooted. If I had continued to go barefooted I might have got, if not tetanus, a badly poisoned foot. Coral is very poisonous. My feet would at any rate have enlarged, and I should not have liked that. Whether or not it is the subconscious which directs us, I am pretty sure that there is a directing power whose methods are, and must be, very indirect. Trace any result back, and you will see what a curious chain of events led up to it. Pointers have to be given us, but we are so slow of apprehension and so self-willed that a direct pointer is no use to us. It is no use showing a donkey his destination and telling him to get there. You have first to stir him up with a stick, then drive, guide him and coax him along

the road. Any means may be employed, provided they are what will appeal to him most at the moment. A threat or a bunch of carrots can be equally effective.

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April 24th

I HAVE been thinking over the variety of causes and reasons which bring Europeans (and Americans, of course) to this country: adventure, money, climate, ease, tranquillity, exoticism, disgust with modern conditions, the simple life, and simple discontent. One could no doubt find many more if it were worth while to hunt for them.

One thing I am certain of: the man who comes here to do nothing is making a fatal mistake. Civilised man cannot do nothing. Even the primitive races die when their occupations are taken from them. It is not natural for any creature to do nothing. He is required to earn his living in some way or other. Birds, beasts and fishes have most of their time taken up in obtaining food. Some birds lead a life of rush which would kill the New Yorker: watch the swallows and martins; they hardly have a spare moment, and the pace is terrific. Evidently it isn't the pace that kills, if the pace has a satisfying object.

Yet man has always cherished the illusion of a paradise without employment. Unemployment, in fact, was an essential of paradise. Adam and Eve did nothing, and made a great hullabaloo when they were set to work. They can thank God for the serpent. That serpent knew a thing or two. It was Jehovah whose judgment erred.

The lotus isles, these islands used to be called, and you can still see the name in steamer advertisements. You were supposed to spend your life under a tree waiting for the fruit to fall. This idea retains a strong appeal. Every year, almost every month, people arrive with the definite intention of being totally inactive for the rest of their days. They are mostly young or in early middle age, too; that is the queer thing: or perhaps it isn't so queer: born without very much natural intelligence, they have not had the experience to fill the deficiency.

There are two kinds of them: those with enough money to live comfortably on, and those with little or no money. When I was in Papeete after my arrival there was a man living in the Rue de Rivoli who used to dash out of his door every time a mango fell.

The mango trees grow by the roadside, and he had all but attained his ideal of lying under a tree and waiting for the fruit to fall. The police would not let him lie by the roadside, so he had to lie indoors: that was all the difference. In the end he was taken to hospital with dysentery and had to be deported. Others of this sort live on bananas, which they can buy very cheaply at the market. They have no way of occupying their time between their meals of bananas, and they, too, sooner or later depart. The idler with money departs very often in another way. He has enough money to occupy himself while his constitution lasts, but no constitution will stand an unbroken round of women and alcohol, in the best of tropical climates. Once the newness of the place has worn off and the stranger is glutted with the sights, there is nothing for him to do but drink and fornicate; and in Papeete he has every facility for doing both, provided he has the money. If a man is determined to do nothing and has enough money to do it on, I would advise him to stay in London or New York, in Sydney or in Melbourne. There he will find distractions which will not ruin his health, boring though they may be when pursued continuously. Here he will find no distractions but injurious ones, besides those few which are enough for the man who works.

It is as foolish to try to live in Papeete with nothing to do as it is, in England, to try to live idle in the country. Country life becomes unadulterated boredom unless one has something to do, and even if he has something of his own to do, such as writing or painting, he remains (if he is a townsman) an alien among countrymen. The country is for the people who have an occupational interest in the country: it is better to be a farm labourer than an unoccupied townsman in an English village. It is exactly the same here, only rather more so, for here there is no big city to run to, and the island is too small for very much motoring. You get back to your starting-point too soon, and it is always the same road that brings you back to it.

It is not necessary to grow coconuts and vanilla as I do; you may be a trader or a shopkeeper, a dentist or a doctor, a tinker or a tailor, but a business of some kind you must have. And it should be a business which keeps you in touch with the people and local life. There are several writers and one or two artists living here, but I doubt if they are fully in touch with local life. They are in it but not of it; they remain aliens. Their interests are not local interests.

It is the law for all living organisms that they must draw their

life from or have their roots in the soil; otherwise they live an artificial existence. Our mother is the earth; her milk is the best for us; we do not do well on the bottle.

I would not live here with a European woman; she alone would be enough to separate me from the life in which I now participate; having no natural link with the people, we should become a foreign body; and I would not live here under such conditions. Unless you are merged in the life about you, you cannot realise your own life. You must yield yourself up unconditionally in order to possess yourself; you must give in order to receive. I have no grudge against Europe *per se*; I think that it has taken the wrong turning and that I am better out of it, but that all to whom it is home are where they ought to be; and home is where you can give and receive. Is not that the essence of the meaning of the word? Homes which are not home are those where there is no giving or receiving; only withholding; for you cannot have the one without the other, and without either there is nothing but withholding. A negation of life. The curse of Europe to-day.

To every man that law of giving and receiving, but to every man the choice of where to give and receive. We are individual, not universal.

Am I a renegade? In the narrowest sense of the word it appears that I am. I have left my own country and thrown in my lot with foreigners—pagans, one may truly say—but I am not a renegade from life. It is Europe which is becoming that kind of renegade, by spending all its energies in creating means to destroy life or to escape from it. Both proceed from the same impulse, refusal to accept life. Natives have talked to me about it; of this incomprehensible madness which has come over the white peoples, who have as much as anyone could want and yet are dissatisfied with it, who would rather kill each other for what does not benefit them than make peace and learn to live.

Another thing that perplexes them is the importance which the white man attaches to the bond of marriage. Why, if two people like each other well enough to live together, they say, is it necessary to have a bond between them? What is a bond for but to hold together two things that would like to separate? And if they stop liking each other well enough, must they still go on living together? As for the children, is it good for children to be brought up by people who have ceased to like each other? Is it not better for them to be brought up by one or the other or by a third party? They point to the fact that without any bond

many people in Tahiti live together happily all their lives, and that in a country where people are fond of children there is no difficulty in finding a home for them. It is true that in Tahiti even people with children of their own will gladly adopt a child whose mother cannot look after it: but to us, of course, other people's children are a nuisance, and we could often do without our own. So, until the State takes them over, we shall have, it seems, to keep the marriage bond. I don't tell the natives this: they could not imagine a people so heartless as to let a child go begging: I say that the marriage bond is an ancient custom and that Europeans are very conservative. This they can understand. I see another way out of the difficulty. We might stop having children altogether, and that seems not improbable. But the Tahitian would not credit that either. It would presuppose a people so poor or so mean or so selfish as to be unimaginable.

May 4th

A WEEK ago I had a sharp attack of fever. It was a kind of fever-and-ague, such as I used to have when I was in Queensland. At first I thought it was a return of this same malady, for, like malaria, fever-and-ague is apt to return. It came on late in the afternoon and quickly drove me to bed. Just as in ordinary fever-and-ague, I had an attack of cold shivers after my temperature had risen, but this time I had also sharp, burning pains in the foot which had recently been swollen. They shot from heel to knee through the calf of the leg. Towards morning I slept, and when I woke the fever had gone. I felt weak and used up, but very much better. The foot, however, was uncomfortable, and when I looked at it I saw that it was swollen more than it had ever been. It was also much inflamed; it looked red and angry. The leg above the ankle was not affected, but the ankle bones could hardly be seen, nor could the bones which run back from the toes. All the joints were stiff and sore when I moved them, and when I put my foot to the floor the sole was tender.

Tehiva was already up, for I had slept late. As soon as she heard me moving she came in from the veranda.

"The foot again," she said. "It must be rheumatism."

"Queer sort of rheumatism," I answered. "to come with fever." I knew it could not be rheumatic fever, or it would not have left me so quickly.

"But people are sometimes feverish with a bad attack of rheumatism," she replied. She asked me how I was feeling, and I told her that except for my foot I was quite cool now.

"You will have to lie down to-day," she said, "and I will massage you again."

I hobbled out of doors into the sunshine. Even with shoes on it gave me some pain to put my foot to the ground. I returned and lay down on the bed, and soon Tehiva brought me a cup of coffee. I drank it and then another and ate some bread. I felt much better after that.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Tehiva, who was sitting on the bed beside me. "I will get the doctor."

"You mean the Tahiti doctor?" I said. There was a celebrated native doctor not far from us. He had arrived a few days before on one of his tours, and people were going in numbers to him.

"Yes," she answered. "As you cannot go to him he will come to you."

These big native doctors seldom visited patients unless they were bed-ridden.

"Get him if he will come," I replied after a moment.

"He will be pleased to come to an Englishman," answered Tehiva.

I could understand that. Englishmen are liked and respected more than most white men here, and it would be a feather in the doctor's cap if an Englishman consulted him instead of going to a European doctor.

"I will go myself," said Tehiva, and went forthwith.

She was back in an hour, and told me that the doctor would come in the evening. Having made such a fool of myself before with my fears about the *fée fée*, I had made up my mind while she was away to hold my tongue about it and wait for the doctor's verdict. In the course of the day I found my foot getting easier, and by sunset it seemed to be less swollen than it had been in the morning. I felt better altogether, had eaten well and had no return of the fever. But I was still anxious, and I was glad when the doctor came.

Though he was dressed in nothing but a *pareo*, a glance was enough to tell one that he was no ordinary native.

He was a spare, middle-aged man with a very intelligent, sensitive face and a quick smile. His voice had a gentle liveliness. His hands were very gentle as he felt my foot. There was that puzzling European suggestion about him which I have noticed

in so many natives. One European characteristic it lacks: it has nothing of European hardness.

He questioned me, and I told him of the fever and the pains in the foot. I mentioned also that the foot had been swollen before and that I had previously had an attack of rheumatism. He asked me if I was in the habit of going barefooted, and I told him that I had been but had stopped that. Whenever he spoke to me he smiled that quick smile of his; the rest of the time his face wore a gentle half-smile: this and the tone of his voice were, I think, his professional method of imparting confidence.

He gave instructions to Tehiva about the treatment of the foot.

At last I said to him: "But what is the matter with it?"

"Nothing for you to worry about," he answered.

I felt I must have a more definite answer than that.

"It is not the *féefée*?" I then said.

He laughed. "Don't imagine such a thing. Your *vahine* will rub your foot and do what I have told her, and your foot will get better. You have got this from going barefooted. It is not good for a European to go barefooted here. You must always wear shoes now when you go outside the house. Don't be alarmed if your foot does not at once come back to its natural size, or if later you have another attack of the fever. Keep your foot up when you are resting. You don't eat or drink too much or do too much—your *vahine* has told me that—so there is no need for me to tell you to live temperately. Your foot will get much better if you are careful, and soon you will hardly notice it. Don't worry, or you will make yourself ill. Above all, don't imagine you have the *féefée*. If you think you have it you will have it. You have only to do as I have told you and let your *vahine* attend to your foot. You may have no more of the fever, but if you do have any more—let it pass. To-morrow you will be able to get up and walk about."

He was quite right. When he had gone Tehiva got hot water and I soaked my foot in it. Afterwards she massaged it for half an hour. In the morning it was much reduced and the pain was out of it. There was just a little stiffness, but I could walk without discomfort. I did a light day's work and kept my foot up all the evening—it was a bit swollen again by the end of the day. I again soaked it in hot water and Tehiva massaged it.

My foot is not back to its normal size, but I am not expecting that it will be yet. It is progressing, and I am fairly well satisfied with it. I shall send the doctor a present of money. They don't refuse money when it is delicately conveyed, but one must be

careful that there is no indecent suggestion that the money is a price for services.

May 14th

I HAVE been to an English doctor.

Looking back to my last entry I see that I wrote that the foot was progressing and that I was fairly well satisfied with it. I am afraid that was only partly true. I had tried to make up my mind that I must be satisfied with it, but I never quite succeeded. Certainly the foot got a lot better, but after the third day it never grew smaller, and every time I looked at it I could not help seeing the difference between it and the other. There was no inflammation; I could get a boot or a shoe on without any difficulty and with only a bulge at the instep and round the ankle. I could do away with the bulge by lacing my boot up tightly, but then the bulge appeared above the boot. It was not the appearance of the thing I minded so much—when I was fully dressed it was hardly noticeable—it was the fact that my foot had, without any question, grown. And the native doctor had never in so many words told me that this was not the *féefée*. I called this to mind very soon. He had allayed my fears, and that was all I wanted at the time; but they rose again, and I had to know the truth.

I chose an English doctor, the only one in Papeete. His practice is not large, and is mostly among the English-speaking residents and visitors. He spends his spare time in a laboratory where he studies local bacteria. He first saw Tahiti as a ship's doctor, and the fancy then took him to settle here.

I found him in, and he brought me at once into his consulting-room. He was a big, clean-shaven man, robust and cheerful. He looked as if he had just come out of a bath, and his white suit looked as if it had just come from the laundry. He gave you the impression that he was glad to see you and didn't care how long you stayed, provided that you had something worth seeing him about. I like that kind of doctor.

I wasn't going to waste his time, so, as soon as he had made me feel at home, I got down to business. I told him that I had something the matter with my foot, and took my shoe and sock off. I usually wear a pipe-clayed boot in town, but the boot displaced the bulge, so to-day I had put on brown shoes, which I had laced up rather loosely.

He took my foot on his knee and began pressing his fingers into it.

"Yes," I said, "when you do that it leaves a dent, which doesn't go away for a minute or two. What do you suppose is the matter?"

"I can't tell you till I've learned something about it," he said. "It might be one of several things. Give me the history of the foot."

I gave it him, with an account of the native doctor's visit.

"Well," he said, taking a look at me, "I'm afraid you have elephantiasis. What you've given me is a normal history of the start of the disease. You guessed it, didn't you?"

"Yes," I answered. "You've given me no shock. In fact, it's almost a relief to hear your verdict."

"If I'd thought I should give you a shock I shouldn't have told you straight out. But anyhow, the thing's not so bad as it sounds. It sounds dreadful, because you immediately think of a leg—well, like some you've seen. But it takes years and years before it comes to that state, and the worst cases are mostly ones of neglect. However, it's not a nice thing to have. Do you know what I should do if I were you?"

"What?" I said.

"Go away."

I must have looked my reluctance. It was more than reluctance; it was rebellion. My whole being revolted against leaving here.

"Well, it won't get any better if you stay," he said. "The disease may advance slowly, but it will advance. You will have more attacks of fever, and with every attack there will be growth. Whereas if you go away the disease will leave you and the swelling will go down, though the foot may or may not return to normal. It has a good chance of doing so, because you're now in the very first stage. You've only had one go of the fever. You don't need to go far, you know."

"How far?" I asked, suddenly interested.

"Oh, as far as the Cook Islands. Five hundred miles is far enough."

"Now you're talking!" I exclaimed, tremendously heartened. "When you said 'go away,' I thought you meant clear out of the South Pacific."

"Oh dear no. Nothing so drastic as that. I was thinking you knew—it's pretty generally known now—that a five hundred mile jump will shake the *fée-fée* off. It's also said that if you

return it will catch you again as soon as you sight Point Venus. But that's not true, if you stay away long enough."

"How long?"

"It depends on the stage of the disease. In your case it wouldn't be more than a year or two. If you could get away within the next three months, in three years your foot should hardly show a sign that there'd ever been anything the matter with it. But you must never go barefooted from now onward. It was that that laid you open to the disease."

I remarked that the native doctor had been right there, although he would not allow that I had the *féeefée*.

"They never will allow it at first," replied the doctor, with a smile. "That's part of their medical policy. The argument is that the disease advances very slowly, and by the time it's well advanced the patient is resigned to it. They think it much better that realisation of the truth should come by degrees. And there's no doubt that with many people, especially natives, knowing that they had the disease would hasten its progress. There'd be the temptation to drown it in drink, the very worst thing for it. According to his lights your man was right in leading you to think that it wasn't the *féeefée*. We often do the same, you know. We seldom tell a patient that he has cancer unless it's impossible or wrong to conceal it from him. But where there's a likelihood of cure if the patient knows what's the matter with him, one naturally tells him—and makes no bones about it, if he can stand it. I saw that you could stand it, and there was a definite advantage in your knowing what was the matter with you. Native doctors are slow to admit the cure by migration. We found it out, you see. But there's no doubt about it."

"There's no other cure for it?" I said.

"None so far known. In an extreme case we sometimes amputate, but that doesn't cure; it removes an intolerable burden, but the disease will probably attack in another limb."

I wanted to know just how through going unshod one got the disease.

"The germ is in the soil," the doctor answered. "Not everywhere, but in patches and localities. Your locality isn't bad for it, but there would be patches here and there, and you must have stepped into one of them. They are damp patches. It breeds in swamps and bogs and in districts where the rainfall is very heavy. In Murea the rainfall is excessive, so the *féeefée* is particularly bad there; about every fourth person has it. None of the high islands are without it. When I said you could go to the Cook

Islands and get rid of it I didn't say that you couldn't get it again there. Remember that. One remarkable thing is that there's no *fée fée* in the Paumotu Archipelago. They're all low islands, of course, and the soil is different; but there seems no special reason why it shouldn't breed there, especially as soil from Tahiti is often brought there to make gardens. However, it's unknown, so if you stayed there you could be sure of getting rid of it and never getting it again. But they're pretty dull, I should think. So flat and confined."

"Yes," I said. "I never saw them, but from what I've heard of them I think I should prefer a high island as a place of residence."

"Having had the disease once will make you careful," said the doctor. "You'll really run less risk of catching it a second time than if you'd never had it. The precautions you have to take are merely to wash your feet at night and never go barefooted. And never go into boggy ground if you can help it. If you must, wear water-tight boots. As regards what you have to do now, I can tell you no more than what the native doctor told you. Don't get drunk, don't overeat, don't over-exert yourself in any way, don't worry, and go on with the massage and hot-water treatment. Keep your foot up when you're sitting for any length of time, and wear leather boots. That's all. It's a good thing you sought advice early. A lot of people don't, for fear of being told what they don't want to hear. A grave mistake, that."

"You've proved that to me," I said. "I feel much happier now than I did before I came to you."

"The worst is seldom so bad as one imagines it to be," said the doctor. "Trite but true. I never despise a saying because it's trite. It becomes trite through being true."

I paid the doctor's fee—it was a very modest one—and shook hands cordially with him. He saw me off the veranda with the air of having had a very enjoyable talk with me. I certainly felt the better for it.

As I was not taking shorthand notes, the above is not exactly what we said to each other: it is my impression of what we said; a materially accurate report of our conversation. I find that in recording any important conversation one gets much nearer a true report of it by recalling as nearly as one can what was actually spoken than by reporting it in the past tense. The life goes out of a dialogue which is reported in that way. Treat a thing as completely past and the indistinctness of the past begins to descend on it; the dissolution of the past has already commenced. Hold it in the present and it keeps the distinctness

and integrity of the present; it preserves the present's vividness. And no record is worth a damn that is not vivid. It is the one essential virtue of a diary, which lives in the day-to-day present, whether it is recording thoughts or events.

It is an odd thing to say in the circumstances, but this evening as I write this I am quite elated. Logically I have little to be elated about: I have elephantiasis, an abominable disease, which for months past I have dreaded; but logic is a solemn ass, a lantern-jawed, spectacled pedant. When the doctor told me I must leave here I dreaded banishment and forgot the disease.

I have to leave here, it is true, but I have not to leave the South Seas: I have not to leave Tehiva. I have to be rooted up, but I shall take root in similar soil elsewhere. I don't know how it is to be done, but I feel that it will be done, by patiently seeking a way and watching my chance. I think I shall take a run over to the Cook Islands and see what things are like there. If I bought a plantation there I should have to sell this one. I don't want to, because I have been happy here and should like to come back when it is safe for me to do so. But I have not the money to buy the smallest place without selling this one. However, we shall see.

How often I have grinned cynically when somebody has trotted out the old platitude that the worst is seldom as bad as one imagines it to be. Another thing that strikes me is that good and evil are purely comparative matters. Had I been told a month ago that I must leave Tahiti I should have considered it a calamity. Now by comparison with the calamity of having to leave the South Seas, leaving Tahiti is a trifle.

To-night I am happier than I have been for a good while. The blow has fallen, but the club was only a bladder, or, if that is an under-statement, I am only bruised.

Tehiva will go wherever I go. She said that at once when I told her what the doctor said.

May 23rd

I AM in Rarotonga, the capital island of the Cook Group. In geological formation and outward appearance it is very like Tahiti, only smaller. There is the reef, the beach, the coastal road, the fertile coastal strip, the hills, the mountains, all in concentric rings, with the peaks for centre. The vegetation is

as thick, coconut trees are as abundant, orange trees more numerous. Here they are planted in groves; in Tahiti they grow more often wild and singly. The people are darker than the Tahitians; their faces are as pleasant, but their voices are harsher; they are not distinguishable from the Maori, and their speech is almost the same as his. Maori and Rarotongan understand each other without difficulty; Rarotongan and Tahitian do not. Though all the Polynesian languages have the same roots, each has developed along its own lines, particularly in the matter of consonants. But it cannot be so long since the Maori and the Rarotongan separated, for the differences in their speech are little more than those of pronunciation. The Cook Islands must, fairly recently, have been the home of the Maori race—and their home for hundreds of years.

The trans-Pacific steamer calls here regularly on her way to and from Tahiti, but I did not want to go by her, for I should have had to wait here longer than I wished to do. What I wanted was to make a flying visit, to find out what likelihood there was of my being able to buy a plantation here, or to get a job of some sort—say, as an overseer. I knew that small vessels came here sometimes from Papeete, and on inquiry I heard that there was a motor-boat going in a day or two and returning a few days later, so I sent Tehiva to her parents and made the trip.

It was quite uneventful. We left at ten in the morning and arrived at four of the following afternoon. We were a mixed crowd of natives and Europeans, and all of us slept on deck under an awning, the Europeans aft, the natives forward. There was no accommodation below, the space being entirely taken up by the engines and cargo. We had therefore to bring our own provisions, but that was no hardship, nor was it any hardship to sleep on deck in the present mild, calm weather. There was little risk of storm at this time of year, when the Pacific is truly pacific. The sun shines, the south-east trade blows, freshly or lightly or strongly, and that is the gamut of the weather.

It was rather like a water picnic. The native passengers treated it as a picnic, singing and playing the accordion most of the day, when they were not exchanging chaff. The hours certainly sped with them, and they sped the hours for us also. But in one respect it was not at all like a water picnic; at least it was not for me. You associate a water picnic with the sight of land, if not the sight of other boats and people; here we were so solitary; the centre of an empty circle of blue ocean. From the time we lost sight of Tahiti to the time we made Rarotonga we never saw

land, and we sighted only one vessel, a schooner. It was like a picnic in a desert, and the careless gaiety of the natives somehow emphasised our solitude. To them it was nothing; I don't think they noticed how lonely we were, and if they had they would have seen nothing in it to affect them: though some of them may never have left Tahiti before, the habit of lonely boat voyaging was bred into them. Their forefathers had travelled thousands of miles in canoes over just such blue deserts as this under just such a blue dome; their fathers thought nothing of shorter but lonelier journeys, and they thought nothing of them either. For myself, who had never travelled in anything but a big ship, so complex and so populated as to be like a small town, our littleness and our utter isolation were impressively apparent. I was not afraid: there was nothing to be afraid of: I was awed by our situation, so evidently familiar to my companions. It made me think of the situation of man in the universe, and it seemed to me that the natives' attitude to this was like man's attitude to that. A sensible and natural attitude, but one had to get used to it. There are some of us who never do, perhaps; who never quite lose the sense of littleness and loneliness in the open face of immensity. If the voyage had lasted a few days, I might have thought no more of it than the natives did; I should have grown used to waking up in the morning on a short and narrow deck two feet above the sea in a perfect blue vacuum—air above and water below, nothing solid but this little bit of a boat, nothing alive but ourselves in the visible world. As it was I was glad to see Rarotonga emerge from what had looked like a cloud on the horizon. It took shape like a spirit assuming form. It was nothing but a spirit when I first saw it, at the moment when it was perceptibly not a cloud.

I am staying at the one hotel, a very small place, and not a complete hotel, for it is unlicensed. There are no liquor licences in Rarotonga, the island being nominally "dry," though not as dry as it might be. If you are a resident you can obtain a permit for liquor, in quantity according to your status and moral reputation; if you are a member of the club you can get as drunk as you like. But you had better not leave the premises till you are sober, unless you stand high with the police. No native can obtain a permit for liquor, whatever his status or moral reputation (he is not supposed to have any), but the native also gets drunk, on his own premises, by the simple expedient of brewing from the orange and banana. Orange and banana beers can be powerful intoxicants, and I suspect that

there is less drunkenness in Tahiti, where a native can drink at a saloon. He is at least under police supervision there and can be run in for his own good if he gets too drunk. Here everything is done *sub rosa*. Did I mention that the Cook Islands are British? They are run by the New Zealand Government. Writing the words *sub rosa* seemed to remind me of the fact.

The primness of this little settlement is what first strikes one about it. After Papeete I find this rather depressing. Everything is very neat, very sedate, very self-contained. All the European buildings are bungalows of very much the same type, the walls of wood, the roofs of iron; stark, respectable, unprepossessing. There is a native quarter on the outskirts, and native huts lurk here and there in the white settlement, but they have the appearance of being browbeaten and crowded out. These wood-and-iron bungalows assert themselves too much; they are distinctly foreign, but they are in possession. I have the sense of being a stranger here, which I have never had in Tahiti. Everybody is a stranger here who is not a well-known resident. People eye me with curiosity but without kindness, without a hint of welcome. Even the people who live here are divided into cliques. The Residency is almost a clique by itself. The men meet at the club and establish contacts of a sort; the women meet only within their cliques. Life here is well canalised.

I have learned a good deal about the place in the three days I have been here, from the one friendly person I have met. He is a planter who was staying at the hotel for a day or two but has now gone home. He was not hopeful of my prospects of buying a plantation here. He said that there might be men who would be willing to sell their plantations, but not at the price I could give. There were no very small plantations; the very small planter was not encouraged; he was too near the class of "poor white," that menace to European prestige. On the other hand there were no plantations large enough to require a white overseer. When the traders wanted an assistant they sent to New Zealand for him. There was a prejudice against men from Tahiti. At present, as far as my informant knew, there was no vacancy in the trading community, which was small and not very prosperous.

Had there been a plantation I could buy or a job I could fill, there were obstacles in the way of my settling here. Irregular unions between white and brown were illegal. I might marry Tehiva, but even so we might not be allowed to stay. In the first place there was that prejudice against the Tahitian, which

was strong in official quarters; in the second place marriage between white and brown was discountenanced. The mere fact that a man was British and married, and able to earn a living in the island, would not give him the right of entry here. That depended on the will of the local authorities. You could be deported also at their will, though you were as British as the Union Jack. If you lived with a native girl you could be deported, and this had happened more than once. The unfortunate deportees were not even given time to sell their plantations; they left property and livelihood behind them.

As a result, there was far more promiscuity here than in Tahiti, and relations between white and brown were furtive instead of frank. The primness of Rarotonga was a cloak for general furtiveness; you drank on the sly, you made love on the sly, you lived on the sly. It was like a revival of the bad old missionary system. That had some excuse at a time when hypocrisy was a rule of life, consciously practised that good might come of it; it has no excuse anywhere in the present day, least of all in the South Seas.

No wonder Rarotonga repels me. Thank God I am not going to live here. I am glad I have seen the place and satisfied myself about it, and gladder that I am leaving it to-morrow.

I don't feel discouraged. I shall find a place to suit me, because I must. When I return there will be some arrears of work to be tackled, but as soon as they are knocked off I shall go to Papeete with Tehiva and stay for a few days. At the hub of this island world I ought to hear of something, and I am lucky to live so near it.

June 5th

I HAVE had another attack of the fever. It was a sharper one and more exhausting, and my leg is bigger. I must now call it my leg, not my foot, because the swelling is up to the calf. The lower part of the leg is puffy, as the foot was at first, and was very red while the fever had me. It will go down, but there has been that much advance.

I did too much after I got back, but with one thing and another—my absence in Rarotonga and the time I lost before that—there was a good deal to do. I could have got it all done without pressing myself, but I wanted to go to Papeete and stop inquiries. Tehiva warned me, but I did not think I was c

it—or, rather, I refused to think that I was. I just bull-headedly went on. It was a case of more haste, less speed, for I could have been in Papeete by this time if I had not pushed. Now I must wait till next week. Also I have lost more time, and another little lot of arrears is gathering. I shall let them gather. There is nothing that can't wait, and I shan't be such a fool again. "The road of excess lends to the palace of wisdom," wrote Blake. So it does, no doubt; but I wish there were a less troublesome way. Such a waste of energy by that road, and you are liable to nasty accidents on it.

Well, well. The fever—and the leg—put me rather in the dumps, but annoyance at having been a fool whipped me up into crawling out of them, and I am now my own man again. Almost. The least bit ghostly still—inclined to blink at the sunshine and feel as if I didn't quite belong to it, and to look at Tehiva as if she were just a person—but the blood is fast running back into me. Blood. The blood is life. It is all that separates us from death. To have that bloodless feeling is to be nearer death than life, whatever the particular cause may be. When I am like that I see people as animated ghosts, trees as dead vegetation, because I am myself more dead than alive. But the sun is then a fierce stranger. *He's* never dead. And it's he who brings me back again; takes me by the scruff of the neck and lugs me back to life.

Tehiva continues serene.

June 11th

WHAT luck ! I must give a full account of it. It is too good to write in a few bald words.

I am just back from Papettee, where Tehiva and I went yesterday.

We began in the usual way, with lunch at our restaurant, a siesta at our lodgings, and then a walk along the quay. To-day was to be a day like any other day; to-morrow for business: I was determined not to hurry any more. Hurry of one kind leads to hurry of another kind; it leads to the habit of hurry; and hurry didn't pay. I wasn't going to let this thing rattle me. To-morrow I was meaning to call on the man who buys my copra, and see if he could suggest anything. He has business interests throughout the Islands, owns schooners and trading stations, and knows everybody.

Among the schooners at the quayside was one just in from the Paumotus. I didn't know where she came from, but Tehiva knew, through picking up something that was said by a native on the quay. We stood and looked at her for a minute or two, and a white man came ashore. He turned and spoke to the captain, who was standing by the gangway.

"I'll send for my traps this evening."

The captain said "All right," and the man went off.

"That man is leaving a job," said Tehiva to me.

"He may only have come here on a holiday," I answered.

"I think he is leaving a job," repeated Tehiva, in an unarguable tone.

We lingered, and a native sailor ran ashore. On the schooner they were getting off the cargo hatch, and he was evidently on some errand. Tehiva stopped him.

"Who was the white man," she asked, "and what brings him to Papeete?"

"That was ——" He said some name which I did not catch.

"He had the plantation at Makemo and is leaving it."

"Was it his own?" Tehiva called after the sailor.

"No. He was managing it for Rapatu; he has to go to New Zealand," the sailor swung round to call back, and continued running.

Rapatu was Robson, the general manager of the house which owned the schooner.

"There you are," said Tehiva. "I told you that man had left a job. And he has left a plantation."

"There's a possibility," I answered, "that there is someone in his place already, but it's certainly worth inquiring about."

I went at once up the gangway and addressed the captain.

"Would you mind telling me, captain," I said, "if anyone is yet in charge of the plantation at Makemo?"

The captain was a Tahitian of mixed blood and good family—a relation of the chief at whose house I had witnessed the *hula-hula*. I knew him by sight, from having seen him once before in Papeete and once when he was staying with this relative.

He looked at me hard, as if he were going to ask me what business it was of mine, and then seemed to relent.

"There's only a native in charge at present," he answered me in the accent of an Englishman. Although he had more native than English blood in him, he looked more English than anything, his being one of those rare cases where the white ancestor's

blood has gained the mastery. His eyes were all that told that he was not an Englishman.

"Thank you," I said. "My reason for asking was that I thought of applying for the job, if no one had it yet. I own a small plantation, but I want to leave here."

"Go and see Robson about it," he replied. "I'm afraid you won't get him this afternoon, but see him first thing in the morning. I hear he's out of town to-day. You can tell him you heard from me there was a vacancy. I'm his travelling manager. He doesn't yet know that Watkins is leaving. Watkins' father has just died, and he's urgently wanted at home."

"I see," I said. "Thanks very much."

"You could ask at the warehouse if Robson is likely to be back before they close. But I understand that he isn't. Excuse me now. Here are the handcarts."

Half a dozen natives with two handcarts were prancing up to the gangway, singing at the tops of their voices as if there were a festival ahead.

I ran down the gangway and rejoined Tehiva. Except when I am recovering from the bouts the leg is no impediment to me. Having told her the promising news, I walked across to the warehouse. As the captain had said, Robson was away this afternoon, and would not be back till the morning.

We finished the day as usual by going to the theatre, and at eight o'clock next morning I was at the warehouse again. Papeete gets to work early. I had to wait only a few minutes before Robson arrived and sent for me. I had left Tehiva on the bench outside. Robson is an American. He had had the bench put on the veranda to accommodate customers. It was pointed out to him that most of the people who sat on his bench were not customers, but strollers who wanted a rest. He replied that anyone who sat on his bench was a potential customer. From the bench it was only a step into the shop, and the rest made the step easy.

He was short, stout, grey and very deliberate. Time had moulded his face into a half-amused expression. He had shrewd, critical eyes.

"You want to go to Makemo, I hear," he said, as soon as I had taken a seat. The office was a bare little box with a very high ceiling and high windows.

"I want charge of your plantation there," I answered.

"But why?" he said. "You have one of your own, haven't

you? Why exile yourself on Makemo when you can live in Tahiti?"

I thought it best to be straight.

"I have the *féefée*," I replied, and his eyes contracted. "I have just got it. My doctor tells me that a jump of five hundred miles will shake it off, and that if I went to the Paumotus I should not only lose it but run no risk of catching it again—unless I came back here too soon."

"That's true enough," he said. "There's no *féefée* in the Paumotus, and those who go there with it get cured. Yes, I see it. In your left foot. Not bad yet. If you hadn't mentioned it I shouldn't have noticed it. I know men who've got it worse than you and don't mean to clear out. All the same, I think you're wise to leave here. As to this plantation of ours, though——"

"Well," I said, as he stopped, "I'm in my second year as a coconut-planter. I make my own bit of land pay. Why shouldn't I make yours pay?"

"I wasn't thinking of that," he replied. "There's not much to learn in coconut-planting, and you don't look as if you'd rob me—excessively. But do you know what sort of a place it is?"

"I know what an atoll's like. I've never seen one, but I can picture it pretty clearly."

"Got a good imagination?"

I thought for a moment he was being sarcastic.

"The form of an atoll is so simple," I said, "that it's not difficult to picture it."

"That wasn't what I meant," he answered. "There's so little in an atoll that anyone can see it from a description. What I was wondering was if you could imagine what it was like to live there—day after day, week after week, month after month. And the plantation's a good way from the settlement—about fourteen miles down the lagoon. You've got the coconut trees, the sea and the lagoon, and that's all there is—except bush at each end of the plantation. You can run about the lagoon in your cutter, but there's not much else you can do. There are no birds but seabirds, no animals. Except dogs and domestic pigs there isn't a four-legged creature on the island. You've no neighbours, not even brown ones. There are two other white men on the atoll, one of them our trader, but they're both up at the settlement. You see a schooner occasionally, but most of them pass you. What does your girl think about it? You have a girl, haven't you?"

I guessed that the captain had told him all that he knew about me.

"My girl's willing," I replied. "If it hadn't been for her I shouldn't have known that the position was vacant."

"That's promising," he said. "Most Tahiti girls shy at the Paumotus. Life there is so much—barer—than life in a high island. You've got the right sort of girl, I should think. That's more than half the battle."

"I wouldn't swap her," I said, "for the best that ever used face powder."

He laughed. "No, when you've got a good one she's better value here than the imported article. Well," he went on slowly, "if you think the job will suit you, you can have it." He mentioned the salary, in francs. It was small, but it was more than my coconuts were bringing me. "You'll have four native labourers under you. There's a house, of course, and a cutter. One of the boys can sail it, if you can't. They're all Paumotu boys, and all Paumotuans can sail a cutter. Capsize her too, because they swim like fish."

"I can sail a cutter," I said, "and swim."

"That's all the better, because squalls come up pretty suddenly in the Paumotus. The *Moana* will be sailing again in nine or ten days. I should want you to be ready by then. What about your plantation? Will you be selling it?"

"I think I'll keep it if I can find someone to look after it," I answered. "If not, I'll put it in Hartigan's hands for sale." Hartigan was the man who bought my copra. "I can be ready in nine days, easily."

"That's all right, then. Take your furniture, by the way, Watkins had a Makemo girl, and he left her all his furniture. You'll get provisions at cost price from our store at the settlement. You'll bring them, and the boys' rations, in the cutter. Once a month, Watkins used to go. Come in again in about a week, will you? and bring your furniture with you, so that we can ship it. If you'll leave me your address, I'll send you a letter of appointment. You'll get verbal instructions from our travelling manager."

He rose and shook hands with me.

Tehiva jumped up from the bench as soon as I appeared. My face must have told the story, for she clapped her hands and asked me when we were sailing.

We stayed in Papeete no longer than to catch a bus.

June 16th

TO-MORROW we leave here.

I have arranged with my neighbour—the man who takes my copra into Papeete—to let him run the place on the share-profit system. He has sons growing up who need more work, and they will make the copra and keep the place in order, and he will send me half the profits through Robson. I don't expect to get much—natives won't work the plantation as I worked it—but at any rate it won't run wild.

I am glad I have been able to make this arrangement, for I should have had difficulty in letting the place, a hired man would have robbed me right and left, and I did not want to sell it. It is a common arrangement here.

I have been happy in this little place and should like to come back to it. If I stay two years in the Paumotus, that should be enough for me. I should not like to think that I was going there for ever. For one thing, one might, as Robson suggested, get very tired of the life there; in the second place I am strongly attached to Tahiti. That, of course, is no new discovery, but it is brought home forcibly to me now that I am leaving here. Although going to Makemo is incomparably less a wrench than leaving the South Seas, it is a wrench. Strangely, it seems to be no wrench for Tehiva. I wonder if she really understands the difference between Makemo and Tahiti. She knows what an atoll is like, but has she, as Robson puts it, the imagination to understand what life is like there? A much higher order of imagination is needed for the second than for the first.

For Tehiva this flit to the Paumotus is an adventure and a change. She will sail in a schooner, a thing she has never done. She will see islands totally different from the one she knows. She will enter a new phase of living. There will be a cutter in which she will sail and a village within reach. She sees all that there will be, but I think she overlooks much that will not be. I may be wrong. She may see clearly as I see what life will be like there. I can get inside her mind up to a point, but beyond that I am baffled, or misled by my own imagination. It is the same with every human being. Our manifestations are deceptive, not always wilfully, but because they are incomplete: there is so much that cannot be manifested, cannot be communicated; so that we see only broken presentments of each other. It is not possible to know the missing parts by what we know of our own

incommunicable selves. They are incommunicable because they have no ratio; they are the ultimate in each of us, which is unique, and from which we have our individuality.

I think one reason why Tehiva is glad that we are going is that some move had to be made, for my sake and her own. If I could not get away to some other island, there was one of two facts to be faced: an invalid husband or a lost husband. I should stay and grow worse, or I should go back to my own country and leave her behind me. Her surface serenity has been unruffled, but I know nothing of what was the state of the depths. I never doubted her affection for me, and these last weeks have proved the quality of it. She has cared for me and thought for me all the time. She must therefore have been anxious about the upshot of this trouble, and I dare say she is as much relieved at the solution of the problem as pleased at the thought of change. More, very likely. It is even possible that she would not be reconciled to leaving Tahiti, if the move, for my sake and our joint sakes, had not become necessary. Tahitians are fond of travel, but they are fond of home, and for most of them home means Tahiti. Many a girl has refused to leave Tahiti with her man.

It is seldom that I find myself speculating about what is at the bottom of Tehiva's mind—perhaps below the level of full consciousness. I once thought I knew her thoroughly. Now I am beginning to know the extent of my ignorance of her. To know the full extent of one's ignorance seems to be the final step in human knowledge.

Everything is packed. I have said goodbye to all the coconut trees, little ones and big, to the vanilla and to the garden. Tehiva takes her spear but leaves the canoe. Canoes aren't furniture, and one is sure to be part of our new establishment. We have said goodbye to her people. I have taken a last walk up to my lone look-out. I am being very careful not to tire myself, and have done nothing in the plantation but instruct the boys. A truck is coming for us and the furniture to-morrow, and we shall stay in town until the schooner sails.

June 20th

AT sea. We sailed this morning.

It is like yachting, except that the *Moana's* decks are crowded as no yacht ever was. She seems to have about half her cargo

on deck. The waist is piled several feet high with lumber—that is, sawn timber for building—over which you have to climb to get forward or aft. Elsewhere the decks are obstructed with barrels and cases, but everyone appears to be used to this. The native sailors skip over it all like monkeys.

The schooner is quite a small vessel, of about seventy tons. Everything is on a small scale in these islands, but one reason for the smallness of the schooners is that they have to go often into shoal-water. In the Paumotu Archipelago reefs are plentiful, the lagoons are full of shoals, and it would be impossible for a vessel of deep draught to get about freely here. As it is, you can't insure; you could, if you could pay the price, but the price is prohibitive. Currents are treacherous, you cannot depend on the tides, which may lay a reef bare unexpectedly, and the shoals are constantly shifting. So, although the Pacific is really more often pacific than not, its pacifism hides dangers.

I learned about this to-day, when I asked if there was a higher rate for the insurance of deck cargo.

In addition to it we have a number of deck passengers. They are mostly divers, bound for Hikueru, where the pearling season is soon to open. They dive naked, and the pearls are their perquisites; their employers make enough out of the shell. These men keep forward, and voluntarily help the crew sometimes. There are no trade unions in these parts. We have one cabin passenger besides ourselves, a young Frenchman returning to Makatea, a phosphate island, which will be our first port of call. Actually, Tehiva and I are half cabin, half deck passengers, but I could have slept below if I had wanted to. There is no separate accommodation for women below, and none for married couples, so I naturally decided that both of us should sleep on deck. That will be no more hardship than it was on my trip to Rarotonga. There are four berths in the cabin; the captain, the mate and the young Frenchman occupy three of them, and Tehiva and I can use the fourth in the daytime if we want to lie down for an hour or two. Aft of the cabin, where we mess (Tehiva messes with us), is the trade-room, which is shut off from the cabin by a wire screen. The trade-room is simply a shop. Passengers can buy there, but it is chiefly for the use of people at ports of call. They can buy for cash or they can buy for copra. The mate attends to the trade-room: he is mate and supercargo. It has a counter, and behind this shelves from top to bottom. The shelves are neatly packed with attractive merchandise, ranging from rolls of calico and piles of *pareos*, through

tinned provisions, to scent and electric torches. There must be a hundred different lines of goods here. I bought a shirt for myself, and a handkerchief, an ornamental comb and a necklace for Tehiva. I had to edge her gently out of the place. She is greatly taken with this shop at sea, but fortunately it is seldom open. She has to look through the wires.

The bulk of the trade goods, for delivery at the firm's various stations, are with the general cargo below.

The two meals which we have had so far have been excellent. Captain Torrance enjoys good wine and good food, and is careful to have a good cook. He comes of an old Scottish family on the one side, and on the other is a descendant of the Pomares, the Tahitian royal family. A cousin of his is colonel of a famous British cavalry regiment, and he has a brother in the Navy. As for himself, as he says, he has spent all his patrimony and is now merely Robson's travelling manager. He would like to live ashore, but can't. He certainly makes the best of his lot at sea, though it must be disagreeable in bad weather, and not without danger at the best of times. When a ship can't be insured, she is obviously not a very safe dwelling-place. But all who sail in schooners from Papeete share alike in that respect.

I am writing on deck by the light of the binnacle lamp. Some of the stars are so bright that you can see their reflection in the water. On any clear night the stars are extraordinarily numerous and brilliant here; there seem to be a hundred times as many as one sees in northern latitudes. The sky is a glittering canopy of them. This must be due to some difference in the atmosphere, causing greater overhead visibility here, for there is no greater horizontal visibility in clear weather.

We have shortened sail for the night, and are sliding through the water very smoothly. We shall have the south-east trade with us all the way, but as our course is nearly due east we have to tack along it. It is blowing lightly but steadily; the blocks creak rhythmically to it, and, somehow, sleepily.

Tehiva has spread our bedding on the deck beside me. She is lying down already, and I shall shortly join her. I think I shall sleep, in spite of noises. I always sleep at sea. The crew are too used to deck passengers to tread on us. The mate has the watch. The captain takes watch with him.

I must close this entry, as the captain has just called to me from the companion way. A nightcap, I think.

June 21st

ANOTHER serene day. I slept well last night, waking at intervals when the schooner was put about, but falling asleep again almost immediately. There is something sedative in life at sea, especially when the conditions are such as these. Interruptions of the general and even tranquillity become no more than punctuations. In two days I have fallen into a mood in which nothing troubles me, in which I feel I could go on like this indefinitely. I am quite alive, but lulled.

From what I hear—and see—we are better off sleeping on deck than we should have been below. There was a cockroach in the soup to-day. He did not spoil its flavour for me; but his appearance led the captain to remark that the beasts would have to be dealt with. They were getting too many and too bold. Not content with running races over him last night—a sport to which he was accustomed—they had repeatedly bitten his toes. He got little enough sleep as it was, without being wakened by the bites of cockroaches. No island schooner, he said, was free from cockroaches; they could not be exterminated, and, for peace, they enjoyed many privileges, but when they abused them they had to be checked. Toe-biting is evidently not a cockroach's privilege. An occasional dip in the soup and the run of the bunks at night are indulgences allowed him.

I had occasion to notice this morning that the sanitary arrangements are very simple. In fact I observed it yesterday, without taking in the full import of my observations. To make water one merely steps to the rail. There was nothing embarrassing in that, of course, nor did Tehiva mind going to the scuppers while I stood in front of her: Tehiva, by the way, is the only woman aboard. But for what is euphemistically called No. 2, the arrangement is little less simple. At the stern of the schooner there is a seat, fixed to the rail, with boards between it and the deck, like the front of an old-fashioned W.C. seat, and you sit on this seat in full view. My first trial of this very public privy was a bit disconcerting, but I soon saw that there was no need for me to be abashed. No one took the slightest notice of me; nobody even pointedly looked away. Why should anyone, you will say, when my behaviour was, in the present circumstances, normal? But there was the suggestion that I was totally unseen, temporarily invisible, which, in my elevated position, was impossible. This could have been nothing but the effect of

inborn good manners. Good manners, the essentials of good manners, not those superficialities which we have devised to hide their too frequent absence, are inbred in the Polynesian.

Because she was the only woman aboard, Tehiva was rather troubled about the seat. But she was as disregarded as I was. If she had not been the only woman aboard she would have thought little about it, and her training came quickly to her rescue. What she was performing was an act of nature, and that regularised it. One had not to be ashamed of any act of nature. One finds false modesty among natives who have been imbued with missionary ideas, but the majority of Tahitians have escaped this. Modesty they have, but not false modesty. A woman will walk twenty yards away from you and squat down in your sight if she wants to make water. There are no smiles, no remarks. But to be a woman alone and to have to get up on that seat needed some courage. It was so much more exhibitivite than the usual native procedure, and at home we had a privy.

This seat at the stern was reserved for the ship's officers and cabin passengers. The crew and the ordinary deck passengers just sat over the lee bulwark. There were bulwarks forward and a rail aft.

I asked the captain if he had ever had a passenger who objected to using the seat. He said no, but once when they carried the bishop, who was making a tour of the diocese, they had rigged a screen to preserve the episcopal dignity. If they ever had a white woman passenger, he said, they would do the same, and improvise some privacy below for her.

The mate is a young Finn. He neither smokes nor drinks, for the evident reason that his nerves require neither tobacco nor alcohol. He is an embodiment of vigour and vitality without being at all demonstrative. In speaking to him and watching him move about you have the sense of great reserves of force under automatic control. It is difficult to imagine him unhappy or ailing. He came to Tahiti as an A.B., and his father is a fisherman. The crew show their liking and respect for him in the way they jump to his quiet, cheery orders. How he must have illuminated the squalid American lumber ship that brought him, and how glad he must have been to escape from that ship's company of frowzy sea-tramps. He would not have turned up his nose at them, but they would have impeded his free breathing. Much of his charm is due to perfect health, no doubt, and much to his self-control—for rampant health can be most tiresome. I have met this type of man before in my travels, and have found

him, in all respects that count, the finest gentleman imaginable. Those we call nature's gentlemen are more common than is generally supposed, especially among the less "advanced" races. Lowly birth seems to have no bearing on good breeding, unless there has been enslavement in the stock to produce the lowliness. Good breeding is only possible among free people—free in the sense of not being enslaved as most people are. Then it is commoner than ill breeding. Good breeding seems to be natural to man in his free, or, I should say, comparatively free state.

The young Frenchman, our fellow passenger, is a less admirable type. Makatea—we shall be there to-morrow—does not seem to be a desirable place of residence, and he is deeply depressed at returning to it. His dejection is a striking contrast to the Finn's buoyancy. Would the Finn, in similar case, be equally dejected? But I cannot imagine the Finn allowing himself to live on Makatea, if it is as undesirable a place as the Frenchman says it is. He might go there without knowing what it was like, but he would not stay there; he would not return there once he had got out of it. The Frenchman, it may be said, has to return there or starve; he is a clerk and has not the Finn's capabilities. A man's capabilities, then, are his fate. But does his character govern his capabilities, or his capabilities his character? If the Finn had the Frenchman's narrow capabilities, would he have the Frenchman's character, and vice versa? I simply cannot conceive the Finn feebly complaining about his fate, as this young Frenchman does, whatever his capabilities. He would either accept and make the best of it or he would take quick steps to alter it. Therefore I think that character governs capabilities, and that a man's character is truly his fate.

But what about the captain? He appears to be a man of decided character, yet he complains of his lot. But he does not complain seriously. Actually this life suits him: you can see that it does. He would not be happy ashore; he would like to be, but he knows that he would not be. He has spent, as he says, all his patrimony, which shows that shore life did not suit him; very likely he spent it so that he should be driven to sea. Back to sea, I should say, for he learned to navigate his father's schooner twenty years ago.

His Martinique rum is very good. In a few minutes he should be summoning me to the cabin, so I will end these interesting speculations.

June 23rd

HAVING seen Makatea, I don't wonder at the Frenchman jibbing at it. But, hating it as he does, he ought to have refused it altogether and taken the sack." He might have developed unguessed capabilities.

We arrived there this morning. The oddness of Makatea strikes you before you appreciate its plainness. Plainness is the word. It is not ugly; ugliness is positive, it must have features, and Makatea is almost featureless. It is something like a pie that has sunk in the middle. It has low cliffs, the walls of the pie, and the rest of it is a depression where the lagoon ought to be. But if there were a lagoon, its surface would be about twenty feet above sea level, so anyone having the least knowledge of an atoll would know that something had happened to this island. What in all probability happened was a submarine disturbance which lifted it out of the ocean and left it high and dry. Unless this occurred before it was fully formed, it had at one time been a ring of coral with a lagoon in the middle of it, like any other atoll. From its appearance you would not suppose that coral had had anything to do with its formation. Nature's chemistry has changed all that.

Having taken in its plainness you are appalled, the more when you see the corrugated iron of a settlement. It is not your aesthetic sense that revolts; it is your sense of common humanity. Nobody ought to live in such a place. I did not go ashore—we only stopped long enough to land the wretched Frenchman—but nowhere could I see a vestige of green. I am sure that there was not a tree. There were just the low cliffs and shallow crater exactly like a pie-crust except for the houses and the evidence of human industry. This was Sunday, so I can only call it evidence, as there was nothing doing. I was told that it was difficult to get labourers here: not surprising. Polynesians would not go, and the company which leased the island was now using Japanese.

Had I come on this place in a desert I should not have been so horrified. It would have toned in with the surrounding desert. Had it been a rock it would have looked more natural. Few rocky isles are so inhospitable that they will not shelter vegetable life of some sort. This was nothing but a corpse on the sea. That it was rich, valuable, was not so strange to anyone who has seen a coalfield or many a place from which wealth and valuable products are obtained. What seemed very strange was

that its particular form of wealth was in that fertilising agent, phosphate. It gave fertility, but had none itself. It was a paradox and a parable. In death it lived and was more useful than ever it had been in life.

It is not alone in that respect, certainly. When a thing is dead it often has more value than it had in life. The forests which have provided us with coal, for instance. In any case it begins a new life; if not a life for itself, a life for others, as we realise when we lay manure in a garden. Dead Makatea, which could never have been of much value in its own life—it may once have supported a few sea-birds—now gives valuable help to man. But something ought to be done to make it tolerable as a habitation for those who serve it. I tried to imagine myself living there, walking about on the pie-crust, encircling the pie-crust cliffs. I should need an anaesthetic. Books or the gramophone would not be strong enough: I should need alcohol. And that, I gathered, is the favourite anaesthetic with the Frenchmen condemned to live here.

Had I not known that the normal atoll is altogether unlike this, it would have been a ghastly introduction to the Paumotus. I was thankful when we dropped it behind us. But I could not help thinking of the young Frenchman. He had no *right* to be there. No one loathing a place as he loathed this has any right to live in it. He has a duty to the life which is given us. We have a duty to ourselves as well as to our neighbours; the two should blend. Unless we get the best from life we cannot give the best; not to enjoy life is to insult a priceless gift.

The Frenchman might have left Makatea, or he might by an extraordinary effort have extracted enjoyment from it; have made it in some way fruitful to him—even if it were only by illusion. Most of us fall back at last on illusions. Illusions are the happiness of the martyr. A happy illusion is far better than an unhappy vision, for, true as we may think the vision to be, it may be as untrue as the illusion. Truth we can never possess; happiness we can, as we see by the many historical and everyday instances of happiness in apparent misery.

June 25th

Now we are among the atolls. Makatea was only an outpost of them. I have seen my first real atoll at close quarters.

At first sight all that one saw was a broken line of green stretched on the horizon; this became what looked like a chain of tufted islets; then one perceived a continuous beach. This was the lee side of the island; the windward side was bare. One saw the lagoon through the coconut trees. The effect was strange. It was, in kind, like looking into a flooded area, when the meadows are under water and the trees enclosing the meadows stand up out of them; the strangeness was in degree, for here all within sight was flood, and the solitary meadow was immense. It made me feel like Noah in the Ark.

We passed this first island yesterday and came this morning to Anaa. Anaa is as like the other as you are like me; both easily distinguishable members of a species. But Anaa, besides its individuality, has a peculiarity which is, I am told, unique. It has a green lagoon. Its greenness is startling against the intense blue of the ocean. It looks like an emerald set in lapis lazuli. The precise cause of its greenness I cannot discover, but there it is. Greenness is very unusual in sea-water here. The colour varies much within reefs, from purple to the palest blue, but at sea you would think that the water was dyed ultramarine, so little does it change colour under changing skies.

Anaa has no passage, so we lay outside. If it had a passage the water of the ocean would permeate the lagoon, of course, and the lagoon would cease to be green. Its greenness must be due to some quality it has acquired through being landlocked. Most atolls have passages, many have navigable passages; but here none was needed for our convenience, for we anchored in calm water close to a jetty.

A French Canadian came aboard. He is the local trader, and he invited me ashore to have lunch with him. We had drinks before we went. Drinks are indispensable, it seems, whenever we drop anchor. One or more of the local population visits us, and the rum is put on the table. I have to be careful, in view of what both my doctors in Tahiti told me; but the sea air has increased my digestive powers. I drank two bottles of beer ashore with the trader and feel not a bit the worse for it, although in Tahiti I used to avoid beer and drank very little of anything stronger than coffee. I had to drink the beer or offend my host, who loves beer and expects everyone else to love it. Every schooner brings a case or two for him, and it is finished long before the next schooner comes. He drank with a boyish eagerness and was very lively; decidedly not a drunkard.

He had served in the North-West Mounted Police, and later in the British South Africa Police, so we were able to talk Africa. I had not to ask him how life on an atoll agreed with him: he looked the picture of health. He has a Tahitian wife and several children. She only appeared to lay and clear the table, but gave me a smiling word or two, and him a good-humoured caution about the beer. Because a native women rarely eats with her man when he has white company one has not to think that she admits her inferiority to him. She would be much amused if this were suggested to her. The custom derives, I think, from an ancient custom of women and men eating separately. Women have never had to battle for their status in Polynesia; they have always been the practical equals of men, though subject to the limits of a convention. Many things were taboo to them, but this did not affect their standing. Inheritance has been through them, not through the male, a sufficient indication of their importance.

This trader has a very pleasant dining-room, clean, lightly furnished and airy, and we sat there all the time. We could see all of Anaa through the several windows: the coconut trees in a great irregular semi-circle, the village, the wharf and beach, and the green lagoon. It is not a big island—I have heard of many bigger—but I found it agreeable—as an oasis can be agreeable. Life can be tolerable in an oasis. The contrast of the desert gives to its fresh luxuriance a supervividness, and endears it to us immediately. There is no home so emphatically home as an oasis. So Anaa struck me. It seemed very homely, compact in the midst of the ocean, and I liked its pervading note of green. I found it hot, but that may have been from the beer.

We sail early in the morning.

June 28th

TO-DAY at Hao. For the first time we entered a lagoon. For the first time, too, we had our engine running. I don't seem to have mentioned that we had an engine, but it is not used in good sailing weather in the open sea. All the same, a gasoline engine is a very useful addition to a schooner. It saves much time in calms, it often saves waiting at a lagoon entrance till wind and tide are favourable, and it is particularly useful in tight places. I was shown how useful it might be a couple of days ago. Captain Torrance and I were talking, seated on the flag-locker, which is aft of the cabin companionway and just forward of the

wheel. Once or twice he broke off the conversation to rise and sniff the air. He said nothing, but I could see that he was slightly uneasy—like a dog that hears sounds in the distance but cannot identify them. At last he stepped purposefully to the rail. I followed him. Without turning to me, he said he could smell land. He stood like a dog “pointing.”

It was useless for me to try to smell land, and though I strained my eyes I could see nothing. According to what he knew of our position, he said, there should have been no land just here. But you could not be sure in these waters what your position was. You might get into a current without knowing it.

He did not alter the course, but stood intently watching. There was no moon, but the stars made the night crepuscular. There was not much wind, and the creak of the blocks and the low voices of the crew were all the sounds we heard. The helmsman cast an eye on the captain occasionally, and other seamen had observed him. A general hush came over the schooner.

“There you are !” he said suddenly, throwing his hand out, and in a moment or two I was able to distinguish a smudge.

We were clearing it, and there was no cause for anxiety. He knew what island it was. But had a current been carrying us into it and the wind been lighter it might have been difficult to escape, without the engine. You cannot always anchor; there may be no holding ground; and the first holding ground may be a reef which will hold your ship till she breaks.

We have a native engineer who is also the carpenter and messes forward. He goes every day to the little engine-room, and has his engine ready to start at a moment's notice.

The lagoon of Hao is vast. We are lying in it now, off the settlement. These villages are always called settlements: why I don't know: they are native villages, with a white man or two for the only “settlers,” and they are not settlers in the true sense. They come and go. But I think that the term has an American origin.

We arrived at Hao early, and coasted for a while along its windward side. We had a man aloft, and I heard him call to the deck; our course was thereupon changed, and we ran in. It looked as if we were heading for unbroken beach. Our engine had started, however, and I did not suppose that the captain intended to wreck us. Nearer and nearer we drew to that line of surf; then the passage opened abruptly. There was a slight scour running, but only enough to slow us. Nevertheless the

passage seethed. The tide had been for some time on the ebb but without the assistance of the engine we should have had to wait. When the scour is running strong it is impossible to enter, and it runs strongest when the tide has begun to ebb, as then the imprisoned water is struggling violently to discharge itself from the bottleneck. As the surplus decreases there is less commotion. That was how it was this morning. Only at low tide is the passage of a lagoon quite calm, but if you have the wind right you can run in under sail when the lagoon is filling. With illustrative gestures the mate explained all this to me when we were inside.

The smoothness of the water within was delightful, after the roughness of the passage, and the change came with a suddenness that took one aback. We were in a great lake. It was plain sailing too, which somewhat surprised me, but the lagoon of Hao is so big that there is deep water in the middle. I had expected that we should be threading reefs, but we sailed steadily on, tacking as if we were at sea, and having no further occasion to use the engine. I felt as if we were entering a great port, but it is a port literally in the blue. The illusion gained as the coconut trees closed in on us, for we could see only the sky over their tops, but it fled when we came near enough to catch sparkling glimpses of the sea beyond. Thick as the trees grew, the land was not everywhere broad enough for them to hide the sea.

We anchored off a wooden jetty. Just here the land is fairly broad, and for this reason, probably, was chosen to be the site of the village. One cannot see much of it from the deck. The brown huts are very inconspicuous against the brown of the coconut boles; the trader's house and store are all that stand out sharply.

We had breakfast with him. He is a Frenchman, his wife a half-caste. She gave us an excellent breakfast, of baked fish and an omelette, and there was wine. We talked schooners, trade and the price of copra, exchanged news and gossip, discussed individuals. The talk was exclusively South Sea talk; there might have been no outer world. It governs the price of copra, we are largely dependent on it, but we manage remarkably to ignore it. It does not interest us, it seems so dull—so, what shall I call it? dim, devoid of colour and light. Limited in its interests though our world is, lacking, one might suggest, in variety, it is rich in colour and light. So we concentrate on it, ignoring the outer shadows. I have called our world limited in its interests, but it is wide enough in extent, and is really a world; there is

none of that oppressive circumscription to be felt in provinces. I have no feeling of it, at least.

After breakfast Captain Torrance and the trader, who was one of Robson's employees, had business to do together, so I left them and explored the village. There is a main street, but the houses are much dispersed. The street is simply a wide alley between coconut trees, and the thatched huts shelter under them. It is very shady and quiet, just a scattered village in a coconut grove. The houses merge in the landscape so that they seem to be a natural growth. That was the sense I had of it. I have had the same sense in Dorset villages; there it is given by the stone walls and roofs; here by the coconut leaf. There is a trace of orderly formation in the main alley; beyond it none at all. Quiet, very quiet, it is. But not dead. No more dead than a jungle.

People said good-day to me, but I was not stared at. I dare say they knew all about me before I landed. There were hardly more people to meet us on the beach than there had been at Anaa, though this is a much bigger place, and the arrival of a ship is an event anywhere in the South Seas. Half Tahiti comes to town to meet the steamer, and quite a crowd collected to see us off at Papeete. There is something strangely self-contained about these people of Hao, as if they were a folk apart. In past days they bore an ill reputation; they were bold pirates. A ship that was becalmed off Hao could expect trouble, and it was unsafe to trade with them unless one had a strong and well-armed crew. I take them to be a people of strong character rather than a bad people. What they did was no more than what other islanders would have done if they had dared—what other islanders did do till it became too risky for them. The Hao people had character, so they carried on till the game didn't pay them any longer. Now they were willing to behave, but they clearly have too much pride to be curious about strangers. On the other hand, nobody scowled at me; I saw none but good-humoured faces.

I like the Hao people. I admire their attitude. The mate tells me that they are hard bargainers but good losers. On the schooner they have to be watched closely. Otherwise things disappear.

There is one other trader here, a Chinaman. He seemed to be perfectly at home here, as though he belonged. Chinamen achieve that effect wherever they go, without losing a particle of their nationality. Chinese culture is so old and experienced that

it can now adapt itself to any culture. Nothing comes strange to a Chinaman, and old as his race is it has youth's plasticity. You can bend, twist, squeeze, squash, do anything with the Chinese race except break it. There is nothing breakable in it.

My last discovery was a Mormon missionary. He was quite young, smartly dressed in white, and was not so out of place as you might think. He was more like a commercial clerk than a missionary. His talk had no religious or theological flavour: what was most apparent from it was his enjoyment of life on Hao. He has an American wife, but I did not see her. The natives, I hear, like him, and tolerate his attempts to proselytise them, for which he gets paid a small salary. If they didn't like him personally they wouldn't put up with him. They even become nominal converts, for a consideration, and thus help out his returns and enable him to stay here. They are really most good-natured people.

July 2nd

WE have arrived.

Makemo was in sight at sunrise yesterday morning. The captain makes his landfalls with precision when no current has upset him.

We were to the west of it and approaching the south-west passage. Makemo has two passages, the other being to the north-east. Most of these islands lie south-west by north-east; they lie like a fleet, for the group itself runs in this direction. The tide was low, but the wind was rather against us, so the engine was again used to take us in. We did not go far into the lagoon before we anchored and waited for a pilot. Soon we saw his cutter coming out from a village a little way on. He was an unofficial pilot, but quite trustworthy, it was evident, by the way the captain left the direction of the schooner to him. He swung himself aboard and at once went into the crosstrees, from which he conned us, sweeping the water ahead, and calling out sharp orders. He was the headman, I learned, of the village from which he had appeared. We took his cutter in tow.

He was middle-aged, brisk in his movements and very dark. I might have mentioned before that the Paumotuans are much darker than the Tahitians. One could not mistake them for people of the same race, although both are Polynesian. The Tahitian's fairness comes out strongly beside them: in Tahiti

you think of the Tahitian as a brown-skinned man; here you see him as olive-skinned. The Paumotuan's features are much coarser; his expression more savage. There may be a strain of the Melanesian in him, though his islands are far to the east of Melanesia, and most of Polynesia lies between.

Tehiva regards these people as barbarians. The Tahitian calls the Paumotuan a "wild man"—*taata oiri*. He is also termed in contempt an "eater of dogs." He does eat dogs, I understand, and breeds them partly for that purpose; but so, according to Cook, did the Tahitian. The Tahitian, however, is now very derisive of anybody who eats dog. How true to type runs *homo sapiens* !

There was obvious need for a pilot. Besides the reefs which showed above the water and those which were just awash, one could see submerged reefs from the deck. But many of them were sufficiently submerged to be invisible till we passed alongside them. Some we cleared by a few yards, but there was no danger while the helmsman obeyed orders and was shown just where the reefs lay. We were under our engine alone. Captain Torrance stood by the wheel, the mate in the bows. There was no engine-room telegraph; orders to the engineer were swiftly passed by one of the crew whose duty this was. We could have sailed into the lagoon from the other end, but I had to be landed half-way, and entering by the western passage was a saving of time, as the settlement is at the extreme north-eastern end, and that was where the schooner's principal business was.

The lagoon of Makemo differs greatly in shape from that of Hao. Hao's is oval, Makemo's lengthy. Makemo lagoon is close on thirty miles long by about seven miles at its broadest. Picking our way up it we had the reef on our right and the land on our left. By the reef I mean the coconut-bearing lee side. The peculiar formation of an atoll makes it terminologically elusive, and description of it ambiguous if one is not careful. Actually an atoll is all reef, but the windward side—that open to the prevailing wind—being constantly beaten by the sea, has no chance to be anything but bare. The lee side, being to some extent protected, has gathered soil—a very sandy soil and not what we should call soil in Tahiti, but strong enough to support vegetation of a hardy kind. The coconut tree likes seawater, sending its roots incredible distances to it, and it thrives in the sandiest soil, so that Paumotuan copra is the best in the islands.

We were three hours coming up with the plantation. As this is at the widest part of the lagoon and the water deepens here, we were able to stand fairly close in. I saw a stone, or, rather, coral jetty, and a canoe coming off from it. Our boat had been lowered and part of my belongings were being put into it. Every schooner carries a large whaleboat, which is needed both for difficult landings and for transporting all sorts of cargo. The canoe arrived as our boat, with Tehiva, myself and the captain, started for the shore. The canoe contained my headman and another labourer who had come out to greet and guide us. They led us in, and as the water soon shallowed, their escort was not superfluous.

The captain pointed out the limits of the plantation. It ran in an extended arc between two spits, and its great frontage made it look bigger than it really was. It is no small plantation, but the width of the land is less than two hundred yards. I had noticed the land to be very much narrower at many points of our passage, and often, as at Hao after we had closed in, we could see the ocean beyond.

The other two boys were waiting at the end of the jetty, and we soon had the first load carried to the house. I was glad to see that it had a thatched roof. All the traders' houses I have seen have iron roofs, which must make them hot in hot weather. Here, certainly, with coconut fronds for the cutting, there was no need of an iron roof, but custom leads to strange follies. The walls are of board, painted white, and there is a good broad veranda all round. There are two rooms, a bedroom and a sitting-room, which communicate, and which one enters from the veranda. The kitchen, as usual, is detached, but there are steps and a covered way leading to it.

We had not yet had lunch, so we returned with the captain and had our last meal in the *Moana*. I don't know if it was meant to be, but it was a particularly good meal. Afterwards we said good-bye to all hands, and the last of our things went ashore with us. The plantation cutter had been out and brought some.

The boundaries of the plantation are clearly marked, and I was fully instructed by the captain before we got here. One thing I have to look out for is the pilfering of coconuts. Trustworthy as our pilot was as a pilot, neither he nor his people are to be trusted if there is anything they can get away with, and it is an easy matter in the night for canoes to steal up from his village and gather fallen nuts. The captain thinks it probable

that between the departure of Watkins and our arrival there has been wholesale stealing of nuts. The villagers would not have to pilfer them; the labourers, for a share of the profits, would hand them over, and hand them over by the boatload. I am to trust nobody. The Paumotuan, says the captain, is a stout fellow, a born seaman and a thorough man in most ways, but he is also a born thief. He does not regard thieving as we regard it. To him it is merely smart but permissible business, in which you take your chance of success or failure, and it is up to the other fellow to look out. An extension of the maxim of *Caveat emptor*. It is easy to see how modern business originated. The ancestral traits are still apparent; the generic resemblance at times is marked.

Our house faces the lagoon, from behind two ranks of coconut trees. Immediately beyond them is the beach. On our right is the copra-house, where the copra is stored till a schooner fetches it. On the left is a great concrete tank, half as big as our house, which supplies us with water; and a little farther on are the men's huts. All the men have wives, and two have children. There is a bathroom attached to the tank, and a store-room attached to the copra-house. The *Moana* took what copra there was when Watkins left, and there is little in the house now. There could not be much in the time, but I expect there has been stealing—not of copra but of nuts.

I am warned of another marauder, the coconut crab. Plates of smooth tin round the trees are the best protection against him, as against the rats in Tahiti. Rusty tin gives him a foothold and has to be replaced. Watkins left a specimen of him nailed to the wall of the sitting-room. He is a huge beast, lives solely on coconuts and is peculiar to the atolls.

My cutter rides off the jetty.

Tchiva is in excellent spirits and likes our situation. Everything is now in order in the house.

July 7th

WE have now been here a week. It has been a week of similar days, and it is necessary to imagine months of similar days with, to be sure, variations, such as those on which a schooner will arrive and those when I shall visit the settlement: on the whole, though, a great daily similarity; but I think I can fall into the rhythm of it. There was a strong daily similarity about my

Tahiti life. There is a strong daily similarity for nearly all who work throughout the year, whether for themselves or other people. What makes the difference is the interest they take in their work, the degree of interest it can give them. So far mine interests me, and I see a prospect of its continuing to do so. I miss the work that I used to do personally, that's all. I have the desire to do things myself instead of telling someone to do them and watching them being done; but it is probably better for me not to have to do them: there is less chance of my over-exerting myself. The leg has not spoken since I left Tahiti; I can't swear that it is smaller, but it is certainly no bigger, and it gives me no inconvenience.

I am becoming acquainted with my boys. They are, all four, natives of Makemo, the eldest about thirty, the youngest under twenty. The Paumotu language sounds rather like the Rarotonga language, and I cannot understand a word of it, except such words as are common to all the Polynesian tongues, but the men understand and speak Tahiti. Tahiti, as I have said, is the *lingua franca*, and no one can get on without it here; French is useful but not essential, English no use in speaking to natives but useful with all foreigners, except, as a rule, the French. A Frenchman will never, if he can help it, speak Tahiti to a white man, but he frequently has to. Many English, Americans and Scandinavians decline to learn French. Torrance speaks all three languages as if each were his mother tongue.

I made a careful inspection of the plantation last week. It soon became evident to me that there were not as many nuts as there should have been, and there were remarkably few ripe nuts on the trees. I guessed that not only had nuts been stolen, but nuts had been picked. This was picking unripe fruit, for when the nut is fully ripe it falls, and it does not make good copra unless it has fallen. A needy native will pick nearly ripe nuts and make copra of them, but the copra does not keep, though it keeps long enough to sell to an unwary buyer. Picking nuts, except to drink, is an offence—an offence against the common good, and generally reprobated. It shocks people not otherwise virtuous, and these delight to convict a respectable neighbour of it.

I set the boys one morning to gather what nuts were lying, and when this was done I addressed the headman. The others were with him.

"Where," I said, "are the rest of the nuts? Where do you keep them?"

There was a heap beside which we were standing, and to which the last nuts had been added, but it was not a large heap.

Puzzled, the man looked at me.

"These are all the nuts," he said, pointing to the heap. "They are waiting to be split. Over there are the nuts we have split and are making into copra."

I knew all about that, and he of course knew that I could not be so ignorant as not to know it. But he was puzzled, or affected to be puzzled, and the others gazed at me.

"But," I went on, "do you tell me that the copra in the house, and the nuts in the heap, and the nuts you have split and laid to dry, and the copra that is drying, are all that you have gathered since Watkins left you?"

"That is all," he replied. "We gathered all we could for the *Moana*."

"Even nuts from the trees?" I said. "Did Watkins let you pick nuts from the trees?"

His eyes wavered, but he looked me in the face again.

"Of course not," he said. "We picked no nuts from the trees."

"Then how is it there are not more?" I said. "Ought there not to be more?"

He showed doubt as to how this question should be answered. My tone was not accusatory. I was asking, it appeared, for information.

"Sometimes there are more, sometimes there are less," he said.

"You don't think any have been stolen?"

He brightened a bit.

"There are bad people at Punuruku." Punuruku is the village from which the pilot came. "We caught them once long ago. But," he added, to give them the benefit of the doubt, "the crabs take many nuts."

"I see," I said. "What with the crabs on land and the crabs who come in canoes——"

They laughed. This was good: I was making a joke of it. A growing uneasiness vanished.

"Listen," I said, and looked from one face to another, letting my eyes rest a moment on each. "The crabs take nuts, the Punuruku people take nuts, but it is too much when you take nuts and give them to the Punuruku people. If you are not content with your wages, you can go. I will hire other men from the settlement." I have authority to do that. "If necessary, I will get men from another island. Not only have you helped the Punuruku men to load their canoes, but you have taken nuts

to Punuruku in the cutter." This was not quite a chance shot: I had seen the rosette of a coconut in a corner of the cutter's hold, and it had no business to be there, as the cutter was not used for carrying coconuts. "In addition," I continued, "you have been picking nuts. Your greed stopped at nothing. But I bear in mind that nobody was here then to look after you. Now there is somebody here; and I tell you this: if I see the copra-house filling as it should fill, you can stay: if not, you shall go: and I will have no more excuses about the crabs and the people of Punuruku. You can tell them what I have said; and tell them also that I have a gun, and that I sometimes sleep badly; but that I shoot straight."

They had no reply to make. Their surprise and their confusion were equally plain. Suspicion they may have been prepared for, but not for such detailed and categorical charges as I had made. How did I know that they had been taking coconuts away in the cutter? In the *cutter*? It must have seemed like second sight.

I let them stand for a minute looking very awkward, then told them to begin splitting the nuts. They started with alacrity. I watched them for a while in silence, then walked away.

I think we understand each other now, and that I shall have little more trouble with them, though I shall have to keep my eyes skinned for the Punuruku people. They will lie low till they think I have forgotten them. Or they may not. They can land at the south-western end of the plantation without much risk of being seen or heard. I shall have to take a prow in that direction occasionally. A double-barrelled shot-gun should teach them something, if they ever come within range of it. A shot-gun is by far the best weapon here: there is little risk of killing with it, and the French are particular about that.

To-day, Sunday, I was on the sea beach. Tehiva and I took a short walk along it in the morning; in the afternoon it is very hot on this beach. Our house, being on the south-east beach of the atoll, gets progressively cooler towards evening, when the sun drops behind the palms. The ocean beach is the very anti-thesis of the lagoon beach; you could not have a more complete contrast. The lagoon beach is sandy, smooth, and the water just laps it. The face of the lagoon is gentle, tender at most times; it extends as far as you can see from here, for the land does not rise more than eight feet above high-water level. The horns of the land enclose us on the lagoon side, and the heads of the palms hang this way and that over the beach, their necks

and stems criss-crossing on the sky where they lean out over the headlands. Very tall coconut trees standing in the open take the attitudes of trees asleep on their feet. But on the ocean side everything is different, except that you still have the trees. Here, however, they draw back from you on each side, though you have a stretch of coast in the south-west distance. This beach is very rocky, piled with boulders, and you have to pick your way over its fragments. It piles up fantastically in places, so that you might think you were among the ruins of an ancient city. Long white combers roll in with a powerful, slow pulsation which makes you realise that you are looking at the greatest of oceans. The ocean beach is severe, hard, rugged; its aspect is as masculine as the other's is feminine. Forbidding as it is, I like it for a change.

Tehiva liked it for the shells on it. I have never seen shells of such variety in size and shape and colour. There are several kinds of which she makes necklaces and chaplets to go round hats.

She is on easy terms with the men's wives. One of them does our washing and is available for housework, if wanted, but Tehiva prefers to do her own. Wisely, for time would hang heavy without it. Yesterday she went fishing with this woman. There was no mention of the coconut shortage, but a reference to the people of Punuruku, whose "badness" was dwelt upon. The "badder" the people of Punuruku are, of course, the less blame can lie on my labourers, poor innocents who were led astray.

July 12th

YESTERDAY I ran up to the settlement for the first time in the cutter. It was necessary to get stores, as they were nearly exhausted when we arrived here, and Captain Torrance left me only what he could spare.

I took Tehiva with me as a matter of course, and two of the boys. It was a long time since I had sailed a boat, but it was a good day for a trial trip, so I took charge. I found both boys very willing to help me with advice, so it is plain they bear me no malice. I sought their advice freely, and was completely in their hands, for there are tricks of the trade in lagoon sailing which you can learn only by experience. We had the wind abeam most of the way, but I went a little out of our direct

course to put the boat through her paces. I was satisfied with what she could do close-hauled. She appears to be a steady boat and not hard to handle. She is of about four tons, is decked and has a hatch amidships. All the under-deck part of her can take cargo. Her canvas is a mainsail and a jib. The tiller is close to the deck, so that one sits on the deck beside it, as in most small decked boats. She has a foot or more of bulwark from stem to stern. One of the boys sits all the time in the bows, except when he is handling sail, to look out for reefs and rocks.

The reefs are nearly everywhere. *Motu* is the Paumotu name for them, from which can be seen the origin of Paumotu. Tuamotu is another name for this archipelago. These *motus* have a curious appearance. They show up above the water as knobby brown excrescences, which look as if they had been varnished. They are really patches of growing coral, hard underneath and with a soft, sleek skin on top, like that of an animal, which gives them their glossiness. At a distance you might take them for odd sea animals. In the shallows you see coral growth at the bottom—coral in the stage of development in which we know it best. Looking down into these shallows is just like looking into a submarine garden, the red and white branching coral having just the appearance of plants. The shallows are shot with amazing lights and colours, the combined effect of sunlight, clear water and the reflections of the coral and of the fish which swim about among it. The fish are mostly small but extraordinarily variegated—striped and spotted like jockeys. I don't know if they are good for eating: I dare say they are, but large and excellent fish are so abundant in the deeper water that nobody bothers with these. The natives take no more notice of them than we do of butterflies. I used to see the same kinds of small fish in the shallows of Tahiti. We towed a large mother-of-pearl hook all the way but caught nothing. Towing this fish-hook seems to be a matter chiefly of form. A fish very occasionally is, I believe, caught on it.

We followed the coast most of the way. Although it runs in the same general direction, it is broken and sinuous, the land sometimes so broad that you cannot see the ocean, sometimes so narrow that the trunks of the palms criss-cross on it; in places gapped. Here and there was nothing but rocky beach, cut by a trickle of water, wide enough in more than one place to navigate a canoe. There were bays and capes. The contour of the coast is like that of any coast; its peculiarity the

narrowness and flatness of the land behind it. I am getting used to this, and to living on an island which is less like an island than a fertile breakwater.

The first I saw of the settlement was a white blob in the distance. This turned out to be the town hall. One may call it the town hall, for that is really what it is. It is a single-storied, single-chambered building of snow-white coral. The roof is of corrugated iron. It is European in design, but is entirely the work of the people. As a symmetrical edifice it is a credit to them; the iron roof was unavoidable. It has a balustraded terrace and steps, and stands well above the shore. It is the most imposing building I have seen in the archipelago.

We landed at a coral wharf with steps leading down to the water. It was a contrast to the landing-place at Hao, which was a bit ramshackle, and I was surprised on finding that our cutter could come right in. Robson's trader and the chief were on the wharf to meet me, and shook hands with me and then with Tehiva as we reached the top of the steps. It was quite a reception, and derived an additional air from its surroundings, the wharf being as spacious and solid as the town hall ten yards from it. I felt like a distinguished stranger being welcomed by the dignitaries of a respectable port. Twenty or thirty of the populace also had gathered, and followed us up to the trader's house, where we were served with rum and coconut water from the shell. We had two rounds, and the chief then shook hands again with me and went off. He is the magistrate, a chief by birth but appointed by the French, and flies the tricolour from a flagstaff on the wharf. Outside the trader's residence is a smaller flagstaff where he flies, on special occasions, the Union Jack. He is an Australian named Cartwright, young, robust, alert and seems a nice fellow. He has a Mangarevan wife, a good-looking girl, and two small children. Mangareva is five hundred miles from Pitcairn—a delightful island, I hear.

I ordered my stores and it was then lunch time. We lunched, naturally, with Cartwright—or, to be accurate, I lunched with Cartwright, and Tehiva and his wife ate on the veranda. When we had finished he took me round the village. It is really a pretty little place, and as unlike Hao as a Paumotu village well could be. There is a main street which runs from the wharf right round to the ocean beach, and the street has low walls on each side, behind which are gardens surrounding the houses. The road is of beaten coral, and is shady and cool with interlacing palms. There are side streets of similar formation: in

one of these is the church, which we inspected. It is hardly less substantial than the town hall, and no less creditable to native workmanship. It is considerably older than the town hall, and its roof and spire are shingled. Wooden shingles were much used in these islands before the introduction of the cheaper and more durable iron. There is no question of which is the more comely; but neither, unfortunately, is there any question of which is the more economical; and economy, as usual, wins the day. The modern world is nothing if not economical; it has to be, or it couldn't pay for its armaments, not to mention its luxuries.

The trader's store, too, has a shingle roof, but will not have it much longer, Cartwright told me. The natives manage to pay for repairs to the church roof, but it is too much to expect Robson's to do likewise when replacement of shingles by iron saves further repairs. A wealthy trading house has of course to be much stricter in its practice of economy than a small Paumotu community: otherwise how could it continue to be wealthy? And if it couldn't, there'd be the devil, in the shape of the shareholders, to pay.

The village is more compact than that of Hao, and one could walk round it easily in fifteen minutes. Following the ocean beach the road leads to a spit, where it turns sharply and takes one back to the wharf, skirting the north-east passage. This is the passage more generally used by ships, on account of its adjacence to the settlement. It is from eighty to a hundred yards wide. Coconut land continues for some distance on the other side, but there are no habitations there. Natives to whom it belongs go over from time to time, to gather their coconuts and bring them home in cutters. There was quite a fleet of cutters anchored off the wharf.

Cartwright's house, copra-house, warehouse and store stand in a compound overlooking the passage and the anchorage. A neat white fence encloses them. The house is similar to mine, but is roofed with iron; the store is a graceful little building with a high-pitched pyramidal roof and an all-round veranda. Inside, it is much like the Chinamen's stores in Tahiti, except that it has no café, and its wares are even more diverse. The Paumotuan's needs have been created for him, and there was nothing he could want which he could not buy here. If he wanted tinned asparagus he could have it. The presence of patent medicines was ominous, but not astonishing when one considered the variety of tinned stuff. The days when the native

lived on coconuts and fish are far off now. But they come back when he is short of money. Sometimes, Cartwright told me, he is nearly starving; at other times, especially after the pearling season, he has more money than he can spend. That, however, is a figure of speech, for he does spend it. The Polynesian is the perfect consumer.

In the warehouse I saw building material and boat chandlery, bulk supplies of flour, sugar and soap, coffee and tobacco, iron-mongery, and case upon case of preserved food. These were merely what caught my eye. From a needle to an anchor gives a thin idea of what you could buy at Makemo. You could buy needles and you could buy anchors, truly, but you could buy ship's biscuits and chocolate biscuits too.

Makemo village certainly is not Papeete, but as a stopgap I think it will do. Tehiva expressed her approval of it, and said, she preferred the people to the people of Hao. They were less aloof, I noticed.

We returned with our stores in the afternoon. It was an enjoyable day.

I am going there again in a couple of days for Bastille Day, and shall take all the people with me. We must have what outings we can.

July 16th

BASTILLE DAY is now well over. The proceedings were a little disorganising, but I am glad that we celebrated. It doesn't matter what you celebrate about, but to celebrate occasionally is a human necessity. The idea of Bastille Day is as dead as tinned mutton; but the enthusiasm which gave birth to it is still on tap; we can drink at that tap without thinking of Bastille matters at all, and it is as good a peg as any to hang a celebration on. I don't know any English peg as good.

As intended, I took all my people with me. We were fifteen all told in the cutter, counting children. I felt that it was perfectly safe to leave the plantation guardless, as no one was likely to raid us on such a day. My expectations were justified: I made a careful survey of the place yesterday and am satisfied that nobody was here.

We reached the settlement at nine o'clock. All the cutters at anchor were dressed with palm leaves, the town hall with palm leaves and bunting. Cartwright had the Union Jack and the

tricolour flying side by side on his flagstaff, and a brand-new tricolour waved majestically from the Government staff on the wharf. Every house in the village sported palm leaves and any bits of coloured rag that could be found. Tehiva smiled indulgently: she was used to spending Bastille Day in Papeete.

There were swimming races and canoe races till noon, and then we had lunch. No, not lunch; it was a public banquet at which we were guests. It took place in the town hall. The chief, Cartwright, I and the other notabilities sat at a table at one end; the vulgar sat on the floor inside and on the terrace. Girls served. There was another white man with us, the one mentioned by Robson, whom I had not hitherto met. He proved to be an old French man-o'-war's-man, who scratched a living as a trader. He was a huge man, the colour of mahogany; very gnarled and distended. From head to foot he was nothing but knots and swellings, and looked like a very old tree that has taken human form. But the tree had plenty of sap in it yet; you could see that; it was not yet ripe for the axe. He ate and drank enormously. I remarked on his good appetite to Cartwright, and was told that square meals were not an everyday thing for him. Trade barely kept him alive: the big store allowed no competitors; though Cartwright and he were on very good terms personally. This evening he was off to Hikueru, many days' journey, and he was taking in fuel for the voyage. Why, I asked, was he going to Hikueru? For the diving, answered Cartwright. He possessed a leaky old cutter and was taking a native with him. The native would dive and Lucien would tend the boat, and they might make quite a nice thing out of it. If the boat didn't founder on the way or after she got there, Cartwright added. Anyhow, it was worth the risk as he was situated, and if he reached Hikueru alive he would meet friends who would assist him. Money was so plentiful at Hikueru in the diving season that no one could possibly want there, and one could do very nicely if he had friends. Even without the boat Lucien would have his daily fill of food and wine and not be bothered with the reckoning. Provided he got there, Cartwright again said.

The *Moana* had left a barrel of wine for this occasion, and there was no lack of it in the hall. We had baked fish, stewed octopus, baked pig, baked fowl, Irish potatoes, rice pudding, biscuits and cheese. Irish potatoes are a luxury in the South Seas: personally I should not miss them if I never ate another, but here they are an exotic. You are either a potato-lover or

you aren't. I think that the sweet potato beats the Irish, though I should not like to eat it every day.

I was agreeably surprised to see no tinned food, of which I have enough at home, for want of the native vegetables so plentiful in Tahiti. We should have had it, I was told, if there had not been large shoals of fish in the lagoon lately, which, the committee agreed, it was a pity to waste. The money saved had been spent on fireworks. So the store had lost nothing by the visit of the fish. The store rarely lost, I guessed, whatever happened, since it was the only channel for spending, and money had, at any cost, to be spent. Money or its equivalent, I ought to say, for it is represented usually by copra, which is money in arrested development. The trader much prefers it in this form, as he can make going and coming on it: he makes it on the copra that he buys and on the goods he sells.

Dogs wandered round while we ate, eating the scraps and occasionally fighting for them. They were enormous brutes, of no breed that I know, but evidently of some breed, for they distinctly ran to type. They were white with black markings, short-haired and with mastiff-like jaws. They fought swiftly and dispassionately, as if it were their daily business, and showed no subsequent concern. Savages pure and simple, they were a living reminder of the past in these islands. Seeing so many dogs about, I was reminded, too, of the fact that dogs are eaten here, and for some moments was a little anxious. I am not squeamish in the matter of diet, but I did not care for the idea of eating dog. Cartwright reassured me. Dogs were far too much a private delicacy to be surrendered for a public feast. A man liked to eat a dog of his own breeding; the surplus of a litter were never drowned, but sometimes they were kept for lean times; more often they were eaten young, and were as prized as sucking-pig. But the point about dog-eating was that it was a family affair; foreign opinion was against it, so that now it had the flavour of immorality; and the Paumotuian is sensitive. Like ourselves, he keeps immoralities for his private hours.

In the afternoon there was cutter-racing and children's swimming. Some of the competitors in the latter could not have been more than four years old: they dived and swam like young frogs: there is something frog-like about the native's action in the water; it suggests a natural more than an acquired faculty. I should think that if you threw a Paumotu baby into the water it would make an automatic effort to swim.

I noticed that by this time several of the men were drunk. I was surprised at this, for there are no grog-shops in the Paumotus, and the wine served at the banquet had not been excessive; so, as orange or banana beer was out of the question here, there being no oranges nor bananas, I ventured to inquire of Cartwright where the liquor came from. Before the words were out of my mouth I wondered if I had been indiscreet, for I knew that he was not short of rum himself, and the sale of it might possibly be a side line; if so, illicit. The wine had been obtained on licence, the archipelago being "dry."

However, he answered at once: "Coconut toddy."

This was new to me, and I asked about it. The making of coconut toddy, I learned, was strictly forbidden, less because of its effect on the drinker than because of its effect on the tree. It is made by extracting the life-blood of the coconut tree from the tender green shoots in the crown, and is a very potent intoxicant. The Government has the support of the traders in discouraging its use, for every pint of coconut toddy extracted means that so much less copra will come to them. But on special occasions the practice has been winked at. There was probably a good deal of it in the village at the moment, but most of it would be kept till sunset. I made up my mind to get away before sunset, or I might be held up till next day. My men were not teetotallers.

Before rounding them up we saw Lucien off. Such a boat to go to sea in! The mainsail was mostly patches, and should have been all patches. In her ribs there were patches of another kind, highly suspicious, through which I felt sure I could have put my boot. He is certainly a game old man. Cartwright was of opinion that, given the present fine weather, the two should arrive. But a squall would most likely be the end of them—the end of Lucien and the cutter, if not of the native. Natives took a lot of drowning and could go without food for amazing periods. That was why they were more reckless at sea than white men.

We watched the cutter run out with the tide, and with Cartwright's help I then got my party together. It took us more than an hour. My headman and another had to be almost carried aboard, but the remaining two men were sober enough to make sail. I put Tehiva and one of the women in the bows rather than trust that job to either of the men; there was a moon, the wind was light and all went well, though we made a rather slow passage.

Lucien's departure plus the Day had necessitated several rounds of Cartwright's rum; but I was sober enough to know that I wasn't quite sober, and therefore took every precaution. We never even scratched the paint. Had I been a little more sober I might have had a mishap; there is a golden mean of insobriety. Next day I saw that we sweated it out of ourselves, so we were all in good trim to-day.

I believe that my cure has begun. I seldom think of my foot now: I did not think of it while I was drinking Cartwright's rum, but I thought of it yesterday, and of the attack I should almost certainly have had in Tahiti, if there was any truth in what the doctors said. I feel as well as possible now, and I am sure that my foot is less fleshy.

It is of course early to talk, but nothing remains stationary, so, if the disease is not advancing, it is retiring; and I am certain it is not advancing.

July 18th

A SCHOONER passed up the lagoon to-day. We knew as soon as we saw her that she was the *Pomare*, on her way to embark the Makemo contingent of divers. One of Robson's managers was aboard her and will take charge of them and other contingents at Hikueru. She saluted us with her flag, but did not stop. I have neither flag nor flagstaff. I think I must have them; these little civilities are agreeable, and ought to be properly returned. One feels boorish waving a *pareo* tied to a stick.

I half hoped that she would stop and send a boat ashore, though I knew that there was no reason why she should. I can't say exactly why I wanted her to do so; there was nothing we required of her; but I did not like to see her gliding past us. Perhaps some ancestor of mine was marooned once. It was easy for me to imagine what must be the feelings of a shipwrecked or marooned person who sees a ship pass him. All of us stood on the beach and watched her go by. She was under sail and was a beautiful sight in the empty lagoon. Strange too, being the first schooner we have seen. The emptiness of the lagoon was marked when she had passed; but its emptiness soon became normal again. A world had floated through the void, that was all; but the void was the normal condition of things. I think that applies to the universe and to life generally. Nature does not abhor a vacuum: the vacuum is the rule:

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anything that breaks it is the exception. Consciousness may think otherwise, but consciousness itself is an exception. The eternal abides in emptiness.

I should like, all the same, to see this Hikueru in the diving season. Torrance talked a little about it, and Cartwright, who has been there, told me more. It is the richest shell-diving ground of the South-east Pacific and is open for three or four months in the year. Not every year; other lagoons have their turns; but Hikueru lagoon is the one most often opened. Wisely the French put tight control on their shell-grounds; otherwise the pearl oyster in their islands would soon disappear. The diving-dress is prohibited because the use of it would enable shell to be brought up from a depth where the oyster must breed undisturbed if his losses are to be made good. It seems that there gathers at Hikueru the most heterogeneous crowd one could find in the Pacific: specimens of every kind and every breed. It must be an epitome of crude South Sea life.

Yes, I should like to go to Hikueru in the diving season. However, I had better not start wishing. I wished to go sailing in schooners and try life in the outlying islands, and I got my wish with a dose of the *féefée*. That's how fortune obliges us, with a grin.

July 30th

I HAVE had an encounter with the Punuruku people.

Though I was not expecting them just yet, I was keeping an eye cocked for them, and took an occasional walk along the beach at night. The lagoon beach, I need hardly say: they would not try to invade me by the ocean beach, because, even though they were able to land there, with difficulty, they would never get away with their canoes loaded. I said nothing to the boys about these promenades, and I doubt if they knew anything of them. In case they did, and sent the word along, I took my walks at irregular hours. Sometimes I went just after dark, sometimes just before bedtime; once after midnight, when I was not sleepy; and once when I had wakened at early dawn. That walk was worth waking up for, even if I hadn't made my catch on this occasion. It was like a walk in the dawn of the world. Out of what was neither light nor darkness was emerging a new-born wonder. Colour—the softest, tenderest, blue transparency. There was no struggle; it came, conquering.

I was so engrossed in the spectacle—no, call it the experience—the experience of the beginning of all things; it was much more an experience than it was a spectacle—that I received a shock on seeing footprints. Footprints, just as Crusoe saw them, in the sand. I think I must have conceived myself as alone upon this rudiment of earth, the first man—the sole being present at the rising of the curtain. At any rate, I was as unprepared to see footprints as Crusoe was upon his island. I quickly recovered myself, remembering that this was the very thing I had come out for; and the gun under my arm impressed this. A gun didn't go with the dawn of the world. It put me in sharp contact with the present, and I was at once abnormally alert. The sensation was stimulating, pleasantly electrical, once the concussion was past.

The tracks ran up to the trees; I could see no tracks returning. There were two clear lines of them and one over-trodden line, so I reckoned that there were at least four people. For the moment I could see no canoes. Then I made out two, nearly hidden behind the crouching bole of a coconut tree growing alone at the water's edge, in the posture of a swan's neck. That had been their landmark, I conjectured, and was their landmark for regaining their canoes.

They would never let daylight overtake them, so I guessed that I should not have more than a minute or two to wait. I listened, and heard sounds. They were coming. I thought at first of getting behind the lone tree and holding them up from there, but that might cause them to bolt back into the plantation, return by land and leave their canoes to be captured. I had better cut them off from the plantation and hold them up before they reached the canoes. They would not have time to load the coconuts, and I could pepper them in the open if they tried to bolt, either in their canoes or along the beach.

I took cover at the edge of the plantation at a point near where I judged they would come out.

They came, each bent double under a great sack. There were four of them. I let them proceed a few yards, then called on them to stand. They dropped the sacks and dashed for the canoes, and were in the act of launching them when I reached the tree. I levelled my gun at them over the low-lying bole.

"Stop," I said, "or I shall shoot."

They stopped, but did not take their hands from the gunwales.

"Now," I said, "I'll give you a choice. You can either bring me a coconut for everyone of these coconuts that you were

going to steal from me, or you can run along the beach and I'll pepper you in the backside. If you don't choose to do either, I'll have you arrested, and you'll go to gaol."

They knew, of course, that I had them. I might not shoot to kill or injure them seriously if they tried to get away (though you never knew what a white man might not do), but I could follow them down to Punuruku and make the headman arrest them there. He would not dare refuse when they had been caught red-handed. Though he himself was very likely implicated, he would make scapegoats of them for his own sake. I had made my proposal because I did not want the bother of having them arrested and then having to go and give evidence against them, if they would consent either to a fine or to corporal punishment. Their 'friends would have light occupation in picking out the pellets, and they would be a public jest for some time.

They consulted. It was evident that they were not agreeing. At last one of them said :

"Will you let one of us run along the beach to see what it is like to be shot in the behind? Then, if it is all right, you can shoot at the rest of us. If not, we will pay for the coconuts."

"Very well," I replied. "Which of you will make the experiment?"

Again there was some disagreement, but at length the youngest member of the party was selected. He stepped out and I told him to run.

He went like the wind. I have never in my life seen a man run so fast. It was as if he were trying to outstrip the shot. I let fly when he was about seventy yards from me.

He yelped, clapped his hands to his backside, and bounded into the air.

The rest raised a shout of applause. It may not have been applause, but that was what it sounded like. The subject of the experiment returned slowly and laboriously, still holding tight to his buttocks.

The others called inquiries to him. He answered briefly but emphatically and with considerable feeling. I saw that they were disenchanted. Excellent as a show, as a personal experience it was uninviting.

"We will pay you for the coconuts," they said.

"All right," I answered. "I will trust you. You will empty those sacks where they lie, and bring me them full. And remember, you three are to find the coconuts; this man has already paid. Now go, and see that you pick all the shots out of him."

They went and emptied the sacks. Then each, as he passed me, shook hands with me, and they launched their canoes and paddled off.

I have not the least doubt that they will bring me the coconuts. These people may be born thieves, but they are sportsmen.

They were hardly away before I saw my boys running towards me, closely followed by Tehiva and the women. They had heard the shot and were greatly excited and enjoying the sensation. All were vastly amused when I related what had happened, and men and women ran about clapping their buttocks, Tehiva alone having the dignity to restrain herself. She has to carry her share of the white man's burden. Moreover, buttock-clapping, though in this case it had an appositeness, is a demonstration, especially, of Paumotu children, from what I have so far seen. They dance down the road clapping their buttocks in unison when moved to express a collective *joie de vivre* such as cannot be expressed articulately.

August 10th

CARTWRIGHT called on me to-day. We saw him go down the lagoon yesterday, and I was not surprised to see his cutter heading towards us when we sighted her this morning. But I was surprised to hear what he had to say.

Fortunately I was able to offer him refreshment. I had omitted to bring anything in that line with me from Papeete, except a bottle of brandy for medical use, but when I saw the part that rum played in the social life of the Paumotus, I got Torrance to leave me a demijohn of Martinique. Martinique is, I think, better than Jamaica, though that may be a matter of taste, and I much prefer it to brandy as an occasional drink. Apart from having to put a bottle on the table when anybody calls, one does need something here occasionally, and Martinique is as good as anything.

Cartwright had been to Punuruku. On his own business. But he had heard full details of the abortive raid, and told me that my action had had an excellent effect—a far better effect than if I had had the men arrested. The Paumotuan thinks that resort to the law, when it can be avoided, is not playing the game. He said that the men were collecting the coconuts for me, and that I should have them in a few days. The subject of the experiment was pretty well recovered. They had got all the

pellets out of him, and he was now only a little tender. The joke, which fell rather heavily on him at first, had shifted to the others. He was quit; the others had still to pay. They, not he, had become the butt of the improvised songs with which the Paumotuan serenades any victim of amusing misfortune. What was most satisfactory was that Punuruku was likely to leave me alone in the future. The headman was a bit afraid of what Torrance would say; besides that, he was annoyed that his village should have made itself ridiculous. While his people jollied the victims he criticised them caustically.

But this was not what Cartwright had come to talk to me about. I don't mean that he would not have called in passing and given me the news, but he had something else to say of more importance.

He opened the matter by asking me how I liked being here. I told him that I liked it as well as I had expected to like it.

"I shouldn't like it," he said. "But I never did care for plantation life."

"Well," I said, "that was my life in Tahiti."

"But Tahiti isn't Makemo," he replied.

"No," I said. "It certainly isn't. But I was prepared for that."

"How does your girl take to it?" he then asked.

"She seems to be taking to it remarkably well," I answered.

"That's a good thing," he said. "You'd have a hell of a life here if she didn't."

I agreed. "I don't mean," I went on after a pause, "that she would have chosen this particular spot to live in, any more than I should. At least, I don't think it at all likely that she would. But she's a sensible girl and she knows that we've got to stay here till it's safe for me to return to Tahiti—and that won't be for a year or two."

"It would send me mad in that time," he said.

I had already begun to wonder what he was driving at. As one of Robson's men, it could hardly be his purpose to discourage me into giving up the job; to implant discontent where there was none.

"Have another drink," I said, and we had a second rum and coconut water. We were sitting at a table on the veranda with the lagoon in front of us.

"It's a nice outlook," I said. "A man might be far worse situated."

"It's a nice outlook," he repeated. "It's the inlook that doesn't appeal to me."

I laughed. "There's certainly not much of it," I allowed, seeing what he meant.

"There's a good deal more inside my little compound," he continued. "Look here, how would you like my job?"

I stared at him. He couldn't want to change places with me.

"I'm giving it up," he explained. "I'm going to Mangareva to start on my own account. My girl's been at me for some time past about it. She's well connected there, and she's sure I could do well if I opened a station. I've got a little money saved and I could do it. I believe it's a good scheme. Anyhow, I'm determined to give it a go as soon as Robson can replace me. I can't leave him in the lurch—nor Torrance either. They're both good fellows. What I thought was that you'd be the very man. You're popular already—you've made a hit with the way you dealt with those Punuruku fellows—and I could put you wise to the business in a week. You wouldn't know everything in that time, but you'd be competent to carry on, with my native assistant to help you. You've got savvy and the right way with natives, and those are the chief things. The book-keeping's simple enough. You'd find much more in the job than in this, and you'd find much more at the settlement than there is here. There'd be much less danger of you and your girl getting bored. At present everything's new to you both. It won't be in six months. If you'd replace me it might save trouble all round."

"But what about finding a man to replace me?" I said. "It's a bit too much to ask for a move when I'm only just here." I had never seriously thought of becoming a trader, but I saw points in his proposal. There would be less danger of being bored, and that, for both of us, was the principal danger here. The bareness of this life was its great disadvantage. Life would not be so bare at the settlement. There would be more people, more doing, more to see, more to hear, more diversity.

"You can be much more easily replaced than I can," Cartwright answered. "Anybody can make shift to run a plantation; not everybody can be a trader. You can, I feel sure. This is a tin-pot job. You've done very well in it in a short time; in fact you've made everything sweet for the next man; but you'll find there's nothing more for you to do here. And the pay is so small. You'll get my pay if you take over from me: that's half as much again as you're getting now. If I recommend you, Torrance and Robson will be only too glad to give you my job. Torrance likes you, I know. He was sorry to have to land you here."

"You want an answer before you go," I said, after a moment or two.

"Well," he said, "the *St. François* is due to-morrow, and I shall be writing to Robson to tell him what my intentions are." The *St. François* is a small steamer which makes regular rounds of the larger islands. "If I can put your name in, so much the better. He'll have nothing to do then but to find a successor for you."

"You think it as sure as all that that he'll take your word for me?"

"I do. He knows I wouldn't let him down."

"All right," I said. "I'll do it."

So that's that.

Tehiva is delighted to go. She confessed that she was finding life just a little empty here, and sees that there will be much more in it at the settlement. There will be people, houses, *himene* meetings, a road to walk in, a quay and the visits of ships. With the ships will come strangers—captains, mates, engineers, supercargoes, passengers. Here, as she says, there are only coconut trees, four labourers and their wives and children.

I write as if the matter were settled. I suppose it is as good as settled. If Cartwright thinks me competent for the job, I expect I am; and I believe him when he says that Robson will take his word for me. Undoubtedly he is anxious to leave here and go to Mangareva, but I don't think he is the man to let anyone down, and as to that no one should know better than Robson.

I was not keen at first on the change, but the more I think of it the better it strikes me. South Sea trading is not quite like shopkeeping. It has its sinister side, but it is a man's job. And it is only sinister if one analyses it. Life as we live it won't bear too much analysis. Analysis needs detachment. Analysis of life is a kind of vivisection. All right in the laboratory but not in the home. If you try to analyse what you are an actual part of you are performing vivisection on yourself.

August 26th

ANOTHER surprise. In the last month little has happened but surprises. Without them I should have had almost nothing to record. The Punuruku men, by the way, brought the coconuts.

The *Moana* called this morning. That in itself was not very astonishing, though I was not expecting a visit from her just yet.

She appeared from the direction of the settlement, and was abreast of us before she was reported to me. I was on my way with a couple of boys to the jetty, to take the cutter and go out to her, when I saw her boat already in the water. Captain Torrance came ashore.

I saw at a glance that he was full of business—a bit worried, I thought. He shook hands quickly but warmly with me and we started at once for the house.

“If I’d seen you ten minutes earlier,” I said, “I wouldn’t have put you to the trouble of coming off—unless you want to look round,” I added.

“Oh, it’s all right,” he answered. “Half an hour won’t make much difference. No, I don’t want to look round. I was at the settlement last night and saw Cartwright. That will be all right about your taking his place. We shall be sorry to lose Cartwright, but I think you’ll do there. I’ve heard all about the raid; I think I’ve heard everything, so you needn’t report. I’m not taking your copra this time.”

“The house is no more than half full,” I said.

We were at the bungalow. Tehiva had brought bottle, coconuts and glasses. Torrance shook hands with her also, and said a pleasant word or two. She then retired.

We sat down and I pushed the bottle towards him. He poured himself out a drink without delay.

“We’re in trouble at Hikueru,” he began. “Gill, our diving-manager there, has had a bad accident. Been mauled by a shark. Lucky to be alive, and he’s expected to recover, but he’ll do no more work for us this season. The *St. François* is taking him to Papeete. Our trading-manager there is looking after the divers at present, but he can’t carry on both jobs. He has a native assistant, but the store needs two to run it during the season, and we want a white man for the divers. So we’re in a hole.”

By this time I knew what was coming.

“Now, you can handle natives,” he went on. “You’ve proved that since you’ve been here. I had you in mind before I saw Cartwright, and our talk settled the question. As far as we are concerned, I mean. You can refuse. You were appointed to look after this plantation, not to run about taking men’s places; so, if you’d rather not go, stay here, and I’ll make another arrangement. If you stay, you’ll replace Cartwright in about a month; if you go, you’ll replace him as soon as Hikueru lagoon closes, which won’t be for more than two months—call it three

before you can take over. If you go, he's been good enough to consent to stay. I know he badly wants to go, so it is good of him. I should then go straight from here to Katiu, pick up a half-caste there, who'll take charge of the plantation till the season's over and we can get another white man. If you don't go I shall take the same man to Hikuera and put him in charge of the divers. But I'd much rather have a white man, and—you're the best I can think of that's available. I know you're quite inexperienced—or I believe you are—but what we want is someone who can exert authority. They're a tough bunch—divers always are. Now, what do you say?"

I had made up my mind while he was talking.

"I'll go," I said.

"Good!" said Torrance. "I thought you would."

"It's true that I'm completely inexperienced," I added.

"Chappell, our trading-manager, will put you in the way of it. You see, it's not a skilled job, but it does need a man who can exercise control—see the men go to work at the proper time and work while they're on the ground. Diving is an exhausting job, but they engage for it, they're well paid for it, and they've got to stick at it. It's not as if the lagoon were open all the year round. They've got to make hay while the sun shines. Towards the end of the season they're inclined to slack off, but they've got to stick it or be sacked. And if they're sacked they're not engaged for the next season. They're keen fellows, so that doesn't suit them. But if they can they'll slack when it suits them, and bluff a man who isn't up to them. All goes well if they have a boss they like and respect. We don't want them bullied or driven beyond their endurance, but we can't let them do what they like. We don't mind them taking a day off occasionally; it freshens them up: but no deliberate loafing on the job."

"I think I get you," I said.

"And I'm sure you can do it," said Torrance. "You've taken a weight off my mind. Well, I must be off now. You can expect me back the day after to-morrow. Katiu's no distance, you know. Leave everything here and get it when you go to the settlement. The man who's coming won't ill-use your stuff: I can guarantee him. Pack away any private things, of course, but take little more than clothes and bedding with you. You'll find a shanty: it isn't much, but it does for the season."

He had another drink, and I walked back with him. He certainly looked happier. The *Moana* was under weigh before he reached her. He was not wasting any time.

I am not more superstitious than most people, but I am glad I revoked that wish about going to Hikueru. I can none the less be glad now that I am going. But what a thing to have happened! Tehiva says that we have started on our travels. She seems to think that we shall go on travelling now until we return to Tahiti; that something—she hints at the *fée-fée*—has set us going. I don't know that I should care for that; but she would like it. Anyhow, we must take what comes. That is her view, too, most fortunately. But most Polynesians have this philosophy. We, rather often, only pretend to have it. When the thing comes that we don't like we are apt to squeal.

What appears at the present moment is that I have a new and rather strenuous job ahead of me. The job overshadows Hikueru. Hikueru is, no doubt, a romantic place, but I don't see it in that light now. Am I glad that I am going? I am not sure. *Glad* does not seem the right word. I am content to be going; but the job is now all I can think of. I am pitted against it. There is no reason why I should fail: I *can* deal with these people, because I have a kind of understanding of them. It is just the same in dealing with dogs and horses. Understanding is the basis of one's management of them.

I am not cock-a-hoop, but I am reasonably confident, and my confidence is tempered with misgiving. A dash of misgiving is always salutary. Without it, you are one of the fools who rush in where angels fear to tread.

October 1st

A LONG lapse in my diary, but my days have been so full since I came here (to Hikueru) that I have had no time to give to it. Even my Sundays have been occupied. I pack the shell on Sundays. It would be possible to do this at night, but it would shorten my rest, as there is the shell-cleaning to be done in the evening, which I have to supervise.

Yesterday the weather broke and we had to stop diving. To-day I have been able to loaf. The wind has been very strong, but it fell at sunset, and now the sky is clear and there is not a breath.

This is one of the queerest spots I was ever at. It suggests the scene of a gold rush; the buildings are most of them so make-shift and the people so heterogeneous. And the way we work is like the way people work under gold fever.

In describing the place one doesn't know where to begin. It is such a jumble, just like a new-rush township. Some of the places stand from season to season, but most are put up year by year because of the risk of damage by storm. Thus wood-and-iron huts and palm-leaf shacks stand side by side. Individualism is the keynote; people camp where and as they fancy. The most conspicuous structures are those of the Chinese restaurant-keepers and traders, on account of their black-and-gold signs—gold lettering on a black ground. There are people here of every nationality to be found in the South Seas—English, French, Americans, South Americans, Germans, Scandinavians and Japanese mostly, besides the Chinese, who are in force, and the army of native divers. Surely so thin a strip of land was never so cluttered up with such a medley of people, gathered for one purpose: to make money. There are the usual camp-followers, men and women. There is no scarcity of liquor or of tolerable food. The big guns here are the pearl-buyers, who come from all over the world, but principally from Tahiti. One man is running a cinema; another is doing good business as a photographer; both depend mainly on native custom, for the Polynesian loves to possess a portrait of himself as much as he loves "the pictures." A young American is running a magic-lantern show, which has been an astonishing success. The slides were originally the property of a missionary, but they happen to be the story of Abraham when he was told to sacrifice Isaac. The cause of the popularity of this show was the spectacle of Isaac, bound, with Abraham brandishing the knife over him: this woke ancestral memories of "long pig," and the biblical story was ignored. It is now contended that the white men also were cannibals once, and the natives are very jolly about it.

There are several singular characters here. One of the oddest is a French doctor who brought six native women with him as harem. He had trouble with them one night. The first we knew of it was on being wakened early in the morning by piercing cries for help. We ran out to see what was the matter, and saw him sprinting along the beach closely pursued by his harem. We arrived just in time to prevent them drowning him; or so it appeared, for two hefty ladies were holding his head under

water while another was thumping his behind. We rescued him and quelled the insurrection. Favouritism was the cause of the trouble, but matters were satisfactorily arranged, and peace reigns again in his household. He is a wisp of a man, and any one of his ladies would make two of him.

Lúcién arrived safely, but not in his cutter. A schooner picked up him and his companion; the cutter sank alongside her. A friend here lent him a boat and they are doing well.

We, too, are doing well. I soon picked up the technique of the business. Except to see that everyone does his work properly, there is no difficulty in it. We have a motor-launch and four whaleboats for myself and thirty-eight divers. Eight divers go out in each boat and six with me in the launch. We start punctually at sunrise. The lagoon-side is as busy as an ant-bed for ten minutes before that, and the fleet begins to put out as the sun shows above the horizon. It is as varied in composition as everything else here, being made up of launches, cutters, dinghies, whaleboats and canoes. Any small craft that can float finds employment on the lagoon. They go out under their own power or in strings towed by launches. I tow my whaleboats, as this saves the divers some exertion. As soon as it is clear of the shore the whole fleet spreads out, each unit to its ground. There is a general ground, which is changed from time to time, as the shell thins or peters out. Shell is located from the surface by means of a long wooden tube with glass fitted into the bottom of it. One lowers the tube into the water, and can then see the shell, if any is there, through the glass. The general diving-ground is chosen after consultation. The proceedings as the fleet takes station, and throughout the diving, are very orderly: more orderly than anything else here. Hikueru thinks only of essentials.

Nine fathoms is the average depth of water on the ground—fifty-four feet; some distance for a man to dive, gather shell on the bottom and come up with it. Without diving-dress, remember. He stays down from a minute and a half to two and a half minutes. Three and a quarter minutes is said to be the record, but records aren't encouraged. We don't want to lose good men. Try holding your head in the bath and see how long you can keep it under water. The diver goes down completely naked, except for a cord and sheath-knife to deal with Mau the Shark, and a bag slung under the arm to drop the shell in. The bag is not always needed, one pair of shells being often as much as a man can get in the time. My men go down in couples from each

boat, making four shifts in each of the whaleboats and three on the launch. The launch is more often on the move, as I have to go round my squadron frequently, and the men in her can therefore get more rest than those in the whaleboats. Two minutes in the water and six minutes in the boat is our working basis, and, with half an hour's interval for dinner, this goes on till sunset. Continued, day after day, it is work to test the soundest heart and lungs, but none of my men has knocked up yet. They eat enormously. What they consume in the evening is gargantuan. I have seen a man finish a two-pound tin of beef and stow away half a dozen great ship's biscuits on top of it. Only when I saw the men eating after the day's work did I realise what energy they expended on it. The food, every ounce of it, is needed to restore that energy. I have seen something similar in logging camps, where men have to work very hard. Fixed food rations for working men are nonsense; a man must eat according to the energy he uses. If he does and is sound he is none the worse; unless he does he drops. We know what fuel an engine requires; we are only beginning to understand what fuel a man requires, because we are only beginning to understand that a man's body is no different from an engine.

As the diver comes to the surface with his shell—a disc eight or nine inches in diameter, hung with seaweed like a scalp—he is helped into the boat by the other men. He then opens the shell with a jack-knife and squeezes the body of the oyster between finger and thumb. This is to see if there is a pearl in it. Usually, of course, there is not, but as the pearl is his perquisite he squeezes the oyster very carefully before throwing it overboard. For the diver, squeezing the oyster is the most exciting part of the game—save on those occasions when he has to tackle a shark. A shark is a coward, though, and will seldom attack where there are numbers. So far my divers have got twelve pearls since I have been with them, but only two have been of great value. They were sold on the beach for about a tenth of their worth.

The diver is a fool with pearls. So he is reckoned, at least. But he is a fool only from our point of view. He knows what he wants before he goes diving—a cutter or a new house, perhaps, or it may be a trip to Tahiti—and if he can get this he is satisfied. Consequently he asks no more for a pearl than what will buy him his desire. With the profit that the white man makes he is unconcerned. Why should he be when he has his desire? The desire for money for its own sake is incompre-

hensible to him. And not being a dog in the manger, he does not grudge others what he does not want.

The scene when the fleet returns is one worth noting. Though custom stales it, it makes an abiding impression. All that comes from the sea interests the South Sea people, and it is not surprising to see a crowd gathered on the beach. Nor that white men form a large proportion of this crowd, for the white man acquires many of the brown man's interests. The cry "*Pahi!*" (a ship) will draw him, too, to the shore, though the ship may be no personal concern of his.

It is a scattered crowd, but midway there is perceptibly a group, which attracts attention. It is astir, while the crowd is idle. It edges down to the water as the boats come nearer, and we see faces turn to rake our vanguard. In one of the leading boats a native rises and holds his hand aloft. Instantly there is a rush in the direction of the boat, but only on the part of this group. Its members splash through the shallows, fat men and thin men, tall men and short men, as different in appearance, one from another, as a pack of suburban dogs after a bitch, but, like the dogs, all of one mind.

The native in the boat is announcing his possession of a pearl. He does not speak, but continues to hold his hand aloft, standing motionless as bronze while the buyers stampede towards him. Their rush is like the rush of animals; they flounder; they barge carelessly into one another in their eagerness not to be late. They are individuals, yet they are a herd, and there rises to one's mind the memory of another herd, which rushed down a steep place into the sea.

Their voices assassinate the stillness—the stillness of idle onlookers and of tired men. They bid: disputing, barking, contesting like beasts. But they have a cunning not of the beast. Each lusts for the pearl, for it is a good one (the diver shows it them in the palm of his hand), but they have a standing agreement among themselves not to bid beyond a certain price for the best of pearls. If a pearl worth five hundred pounds can be bought for fifty pounds, why should any but a fool give more for it? They exemplify the old adage of honour among thieves. But there is a cruel struggle between honour and avarice as the limit of the bidding is reached.

In a little more than a minute the pearl has changed hands, and there is the same bestial scurry towards another boat in which a diver is standing. Philosophically viewed, the result, as I have shown, is quite satisfactory; buyer and seller each has

what he wants. A pearl of small value does not change hands so quickly; sometimes more is asked for it than it is worth; then, if there is another pearl being offered for inspection, the diver finds himself deserted.

After a while one takes little notice of this scene. We try, in fact, to disregard it. It becomes no more than faintly repellent and disturbing to us who have broiled and toiled all day in the boats and in the water and have work yet to be done. Before we eat, the shell must be taken ashore, and heaped where it can be cleaned after supper.

Hikueru does not sit up late. The men who spend the money go to bed early, and those who take it are hard pressed in the evening, for the pace is forced all round.

It is half-past ten at this moment, and I am sitting on the veranda of our shanty, which has a clear view of the lagoon and the curving beach. Tehiva has just gone to bed. She is not in love with Hikueru. It amused her at first, but it is an unhomelike place, with nothing to compensate this, once the novelty has worn off. It cannot be made homelike. It is unrestful because there is no permanence about it; and she, as a woman, has little to do here. It is ugly, too, with an ugliness which I have never noticed in any other atoll. It is like a woman who has stopped caring. Invaded, despoiled, prostituted, there is nothing more for Hikueru to care about. As an atoll, a simple thing of palm leaves, sand and sea water, it has given up.

But to-night all that is hidden. There is no moon, only the dark blue velvet night, the diamonds and the diamond dust of stars, as thick as the lights of a city. In the anchorage is a nearer constellation, the riding-lights of schooners. Ashore there are few lights to be seen; what are visible are those of business men counting their takings and of pearl-buyers playing poker or bridge. The pearl-buyers are the only persons of leisure here, and cards their principal solace. They daren't drink much; they carry their wealth about with them, and a drunken pearl-buyer would soon be marked down. A Japanese or a native, most likely, would get him. Not a Chinaman. Honesty is the Chinaman's policy: not, in his morality, "the best policy," as we put it, meaning that dishonesty deserves consideration also, and might be commendable if it weren't so risky; but the only policy worth consideration.

Well, I have seen Hikueru; I am satisfied to have seen it, and when I go I shan't want to see it again. I have done all right; I have had no serious difficulties; but the place depresses me.

Perhaps I am tired—more tired, that is, than I knew, before the weather broke and I could rest. Perhaps for that reason I don't see Hikueru in the best light. When there's nobody here but its own people it may look as an atoll ought to look, just as I shall feel as I ought to feel when I am away from it. We see what is within us; or, at least, all that we see is coloured by the changing colour in ourselves. When I am dull all the world is dull. To the poet all the world is poetry; to the capitalist all the world is capital; it is indeed a diversified universe, for it changes not only with the individual but with his moods.

But if I am tired with merely broiling in the launch all day and seeing to this and that till I go to bed, what about the divers, who really work? It is absurd to think of them as animals just doing what they are told; they have the mental as well as the physical quality of endurance. They are heroes to keep going. They don't want to get up in the morning any more than I do; but by an effort of will they rise, and go down, smiling, to the boats and to the bottom of the sea. Day after day, week after week, month after month. They smile and I smile; we understand each other; there is a bond between us; and so I have no trouble with them. This will help me when I start trading.

In six weeks we should be away from here.

November 10th

MAKEMO. This is Sunday, and we returned last Friday from Hikueru. It was a rough passage. The *Moana* brought us, and she had a slight accident on the way there; grazed the edge of a reef. She was leaking, but not badly, when she arrived, and the foul weather which came down on us as soon as we were clear of Hikueru made the leak more serious. The pump was clanking night and day uninterruptedly. Not a cheerful sound, especially when you know the water is gaining on you. We were heavily loaded too, with copra below and shell on deck. The day before we reached Makemo it became a question of whether or not the shell should be put overboard: we could not get up the copra, for lightening the hold and leaving the deck-load would have disturbed the balance of the schooner, too big a hazard in the sea that was running. But the weather showed signs of abating and we struggled on into port. It looked as if the weather had been sent for the passage only, for

it cleared off directly we were in the lagoon, and there has since been a flat calm. We can look for dirty weather now, though—dirty weather, calms and variable winds. The shell was put ashore and some of the copra, and the schooner is now being patched up for the run back to Tahiti.

Tehiva caught a cold on the passage. We slept below, I need hardly say, but the air was very close down there with everything shut, while on deck it was much the contrary, and I think she caught cold from the difference of atmosphere. She has a nasty cough and a lot of phlegm with it. She does not like herself, as she is not used to being ill. I have made her go to bed and have got an old woman to look after her. But we are all at sixes and sevens, for Cartwright is still here with his wife and belongings, and my own furniture, except the bed, which I have put up in the sitting-room, must stay in the warehouse till he goes. His cutter and my old cutter brought it up yesterday from the plantation, the men having to use the sweeps. I was myself too busy to get down there.

Cartwright will be here till the end of the week or later, when he will sail with Torrance for Tahiti. Then, with Tehiva better, we should be able to settle down. The whole village is in a turmoil now, owing to the return of the divers with money in their pockets. There has been a good deal of drinking, and there was a row last night when some men wanted the store opened. They were blind drunk, so we pitched them out.

To-day, the store being closed, I have been put through the books by Cartwright. Not quite as simple as ABC, nor, on the other hand, as puzzling as abracadabra. I think I have a grasp of them. Next week I take a short course in actual trading, with Cartwright at my elbow. Then we take stock and he hands over to me.

Thank goodness I am well. In the last month I got my second wind and was wonderfully fresh at the end.

November 19th

THE *Moana* sailed yesterday, taking Cartwright. I am not sorry to be left to myself. Really, though, I am not left to my own resources quite, for Punua, my native assistant, is a useful man. He is a sort of Permanent Under Secretary to me, and guides me in technicalities. He is a Tahitian and has no relatives here,

a good thing; if he had any, I should need to be suspicious of him. As it is, I have to beware that he does not land me in favours to any of his friends. These people are so much more kindly than scrupulous.

Tehiva is up and about. She is decidedly better, but the cough sticks. I suppose it will take time to get rid of it.

My furniture is all in place, and the house beginning to look more like a home now. Wonderful the difference your own furniture makes. It may be a nuisance to cart about sometimes, but if you have it you carry home with you.

One thing I have to be very careful of is not to have "wet" or "green" copra foisted on me. "Wet" copra is copra that has not been dried long enough; "green" copra is copra made from the immature nut. The native in urgent need of cash or goods will try this dodge even on an old hand, by dressing the top of the sack with a little dry copra. You can't turn out every sack before you weigh the stuff, but if you have any suspicion you can plunge your hand into the sack, and the feel of the copra below and its temperature will tell you. Copra that is not perfectly dry heats quickly, and this is the usual cause of fires on copra vessels. The copra heats to the point of combustion. Leaving that rather rare occurrence out of account, wet copra loses weight, even if it dries in store, and green copra rots quickly. Fully dry copra will keep its quality indefinitely.

I caught one customer to-day, and the word has now gone round that I am not to be bamboozled so easily. There were half a dozen urchins standing by to see me weigh the copra, and they raced off in every direction with the interesting news. I am watched in every action I perform, almost in every movement I make. Makerno is taking the most careful stock of me. I don't mind, being on my guard, and it is all to the good when some would-be clever joker gets bowled out.

The hardest thing of all is to know when and how much credit to give. One has to weigh up the chances of getting a bad debt or losing a customer. I have a black list and a white list, but they don't cover the whole problem, which is an intricate and delicate one. I can't rely on Punua's advice in this matter. In the first place he is not the responsible party, and in the second place he has too much humanity. As a third complicating factor, he has his prejudices.

November 27th

I RETURNED this afternoon from Punuruku, where I spent the night. I took Tehiva with me, as she did not like being left alone, and I did not much like leaving her, but I was a little anxious about the weather, which one can't depend on now. However, we had nothing worse than a squall, which was over in a few minutes. The rest of the way, there and back, there were light winds and calms. The wind is capricious now, but comes most often from the north-east.

On the way down from Punuruku, having the wind behind me, I called at the plantation. The man from Katiu is still there; so are my old labourers and their families, who seemed very glad to see us. There had been another raid on the plantation, but again by great good luck it had been interrupted, though this time the marauders had got clear, without their spoils. That, however, I think, will end this form of enterprise. Punuruku, when I arrived there, did not want to talk about it. I did talk about it, none the less, but was careful to be humorous on the subject. They were very sheepish under my prods, except the headman, who declared he knew nothing about the matter. It had been impossible to identify the culprits, and that, of course, he knew.

Punuruku, the village, is primitive. It is what it might have been a hundred years ago, presuming that a village stood here then: no church, no trader, nothing but palm-leaf huts. It tones with the landscape, and that is the best one can say of it: but, come to think of it, it is a good deal to say, for how seldom do the works of man tone with the landscape. Too often man's habitations make him seem like an alien upon earth.

I bought quite a nice lot of copra here, and nobody tried to cheat me. In fact, everyone showed me goodwill; none more than the men I had caught.

In the evening I took a short walk and came on the remains of a house, store and garden. Little more than the foundations of the buildings were standing, and the garden was just a scar. It looked just like a cicatrix in the bush, which would one day grow over it again entirely. Viewed sentimentally the whole was a sad sight, for there had been human hopes and human endeavours here once, and they were gone. I tried to people it with ghosts, of father, mother and children; but I could not make ghosts of them; they were, to me, live people, who yet

had passed away. These people made me sorry, because they were alive to me; you cannot be sorry about a ghost.

On returning to the village I learned that a Danish sea-captain had formerly lived and traded here. He had been fond of the place and had brought soil from Tahiti to make his garden. He had been liked and had done well as a trader. But his wife's longing for "town" life had driven him away; to satisfy it, they had gone to the settlement, but he could not compete with the trader there. His wife, a native of Makemo, had property on the atoll, and they could live; but he, with nothing to do, languished and died. Soon afterwards his wife died. The children were scattered. So I was justified in my sadness.

We slept on the deck of the cutter. Ashore the mosquitoes were awful, but twenty yards out from the beach there was not one. It was a brilliant moonlight night, and I was a long time going to sleep, it was all so beautiful. I was awake early, and the dawn was as wonderful as the night.

I wrote this about it:

"I lie in my boat.
The beach is a pale indication,
The lagoon a grey silk sheet.
Coconut trees criss-cross,
And crane giraffe-like necks
Or loll their mops
Against a stained-glass east.
The world is soundless
But for the chitter and twitter
And the tiny slappings
Of the water-baby under my keel.
There is a growing luminosity
Of blueness, the rose and the green
Of the stained glass die.
The water turns to lavender,
The beach to pearl.
All around me now is a blue transparency,
A mounting marvel
Of victorious blue light.
I am the centre of it,
I am alone, remote,
At the world's dawn."

Tehiva is none the worse for the trip, but I wish she could lose her cough.

Lucien is back. He returned while I was away, in a cutter which he had bought at Hikueru from the proceeds of his pearling.

December 1st

Every day since Lucien has been back he has bought a bottle of vinegar from me. Yesterday (Saturday) he bought two bottles. I could not understand how he came to be using so much vinegar, so I asked Punua about it.

Punua said that he drank it. He must drink something with his meals, and he drank vinegar when he was out of wine. It was well known; he said it was the nearest thing. At Hikueru he had had plenty of wine, but he had not been able to take any away with him, so now, naturally, he was missing it. He would get no more till a schooner called; coffee at midday was not to be thought of; he had therefore to drink vinegar or water, and water was intolerable.

Fortunately I am well supplied with vinegar; perhaps this is on Lucien's account. If so, it was one of the few things that Cartwright forgot to mention to me. Or he may have thought that Lucien was not returning. I must see that I keep the supply up. The old man gets his trade goods from a French firm, and they keep him rather short, I believe. At present he has nothing whatever in his store, so he has to buy his provender from me. He pays cash for everything, and owes nothing, but he would be an embarrassment if he ever went broke. I should have, I suppose, to trust him to get to Hikueru again and come back safely with his pockets full. He does not speak a word of English and will only talk with me in French. If I slip in a sentence in Tahiti he pretends not to understand me.

Alcool de Menthe is another beverage here, but I was told about that. It is a French remedy for neuralgia, and I should have been astonished at the prevalence of this complaint if I had not known about it. Diluted with coconut water it makes a passable drink, known as Paumotu cocktail. White men take it as an aperitif when nothing better is on hand, but only the hardened drinker uses it freely. Its foundation is crude spirit. I carry only a small stock of it, and it is too expensive a drink to be a danger to the general population. In selling it I am supposed to satisfy myself that it is required for its specific

medical purpose, but neuralgia is a difficult complaint to diagnose, and one has to take a man's word for it. If, being a person of integrity, he nurses his head in his hand, I accept this as evidence that he is suffering from what *Alcoöl de Menthe* will cure.

December 8th

THE *St. François* called here yesterday, and a French schooner arrived the day before. All the schooners, nominally, are French; Papeete is their port and they fly the tricolour, but we distinguish between French- and British-owned schooners. No others come here. The British, however they may be officered, always have a British aura (the *Moana* has it, though her captain is a Tahitian and her mate a Finn); the French are distinctively French. The *St. François* (our steamer, as I have mentioned) was gone in two hours; the schooner is still in the lagoon.

Directly a ship is sighted there is a stir, which becomes commotion when it is seen that she is visiting us. The *St. François* comes in if tide and weather permit; otherwise she sends a boat to the ocean beach, if she can; if she can't, she just passes on. But she carries mail, and does her best to land it. Steamer though she is, she causes less commotion here than a schooner makes; the schooner is a sort of guest and friend of the family, the steamer a passing traveller. For the schooner we dress up: we can't be expected to do that for a visitor who stays only an hour or two and takes very little notice of us. The *St. François* supercargo comes ashore and delivers his mail to the chief, who, besides the magistrate, is the postmaster and everything else official on the island; the supercargo may bring a supercilious passenger with him, who stalks about, viewing us and our village with silent and bored curiosity. His looks mortify us, for we are sensitive, and we shrink from his aloofness. This seems unnatural in a visitor. We say to ourselves that he is not one of us, nor is he a man of the sea. He is one of those people who go about the world, as it appears, for a penance. We do not understand them, nor they us.

With a schooner it is all quite different. It is a reunion of old friends. Our best frocks and gaudiest shirts come out, and children scamper about beating their buttocks. Many of their elders look as if they would like to do so, but a sense of maturity

restrains them. I and the chief and Lucien put on white coats; we don't keep them on all the time, but we receive our visitors in them, and put them on again when we go aboard. The girls stick a flower or two in their hair; the young men wind wreaths of shells round their hats.

For the young the affair is one of pleasure entirely; for the older ones business and pleasure have to be combined. In the case of any schooner not of my own firm I have to be on the *qui vive*. It is important for me to learn at once what price such a schooner is giving for copra. If she is giving more than I am giving, there is a rush to sell her what copra there is on hand. I then have to announce that I am giving the same price: if the schooner can give it, it is safe enough for me to give it; the price, I understand, has risen. Provided I give as much, I can keep most of my customers from selling away from me; if I don't, nothing will hold them. Every wile is used by the rival schooner to get my customers to sell to her; goods which I have not in stock are dangled as a bait, or a credit is arranged, to be liquidated in copra. This may mean that the man thus pledged will not sell me his copra until he has paid the schooner on her return. I then have to stop his credit, to teach him a lesson. I shall have to teach two of my customers lessons when this schooner has gone.

The underground fight between myself and the schooner does not prevent us from being good friends on the surface. Her captain and supercargo dined with me and I have dined with them. We don't drug each other's rum or poison the entrée. I bought a cheese and a ham from them. We are as friendly and convivial as if they were on a pleasure cruise and I were here for my health. Funny to remember that I am: but I have almost forgotten about that. My foot does not give me a thought now: the two are still not a perfect match, but the difference is hardly noticeable.

The schooner makes a lively break in the routine. As I have indicated, her presence gives some anxiety; I have lost a little trade, as was to be expected; but her visit has not been as profitable as she would like it to have been. The less profitable I can make the visits of rival schooners, the fewer rival schooners I shall have, and the more trade, therefore, I shall get.

December 10th

THE French schooner was hardly out of the passage when another was sighted making for us. This turned out to be the Administrator's schooner. His visits are not occasions of festivity; they are serious, like the inspections of a commanding officer.

He governs the Paumotu Group, and is, fittingly, a naval officer. Naval officers make the best French administrators in the South Seas.

He came ashore and was met by our chief and magistrate in white coat and tricolour sash. His first visit was to the town hall, where he heard cases and received petitions. He then paid me a visit and tested my scales. They were true, I am glad to say, but I had some panic-stricken moments while he was testing them, for I had unthinkingly taken them on trust. It was not, in fact, till he brought up the subject of my scales that I remembered that scales could be false. I reproached Punua later for not having warned me, but Punua said that he knew they were true, and the Administrator knew, and everybody knew, and he thought I knew. But if I didn't turn pale I felt pale. Could anything have been more shameful than to have been caught with false scales? I might indeed have known that they would be true, but panic did not give me the chance to think.

He glanced at my licence, took a look round, shook hands with me, said he liked Englishmen, and went off.

After that he inspected the settlement, and having found all present and correct, returned aboard his schooner. I noticed that he seemed to know many of the people personally, and that the children followed him familiarly. Before he was back at the wharf he had one on each hand.

A good sort, I should think, and devoted to the natives' interests. I should say that he places them far above those of the European. When he said he liked Englishmen I conjectured that there were a good many white men whom he did not like, and that he only liked Englishmen better than some of the rest. But that is the right sort of man for an administrator here; the white man can and does look after himself, at the native's expense, as a rule.

Perhaps I should not have likened him to a commanding officer; he was more like an old-fashioned father (though young

enough in years); and if his visits are regarded seriously, they are not feared, except by evil-doers.

He has a way of dropping in, I am told, when he is least expected.

December 18th

THE old woman whom I had to look after Tehiva has been telling me some interesting things to-day. She is a bit of a doctor, as well as an expert masseuse, and I had her in again to see if she knew of any medicine which would help the cough. The cough medicines in the store have done no good, and Tehiva has had this cough for five or six weeks now. She never used to have a cough, and I don't like it.

The old woman doesn't think much of it, apparently; she says that a cough takes time to go away, and that Tehiva caught a bad cold on the voyage. She is giving her some stuff which tastes very bad, and which Tehiva prizes accordingly. I fidget, I suppose, because I am not used to a cough, and a cough does certainly force itself on one's attention.

After bringing the medicine the old woman settled down to talk about people's health in general. She said that it was not what it used to be; that people weren't so hardy as they had been, and that women, in particular, were more delicate. In the old days, she said, when a woman had had a baby, she would walk straight down to the sea, have a good bathe, come out and be all right again; now she had to lay up afterwards like a white woman; or she thought she had to, which came to the same thing. Everybody and everything was degenerating. It was the old story of *laudator temporis acti*, but I dare say there was a good deal of truth in it.

From that the old lady went on to talk about confinements. These, she allowed, were carried out in the old style, up to the birth of the child. I asked what this style was, and this is what she told me, partly in words and partly in pantomime.

When the hour of labour arrives the husband enters his wife's bed and takes up a sitting posture behind her, so placing himself that she lies between his thighs. Thus, in the strainings of parturition, she has a living and flexible support, and, more than that, bodily response, for he answers to her every motion.

It may well be called a partnership in child labour, though the woman keeps all the pains. In the husband's accidental absence a friend of the family or any man available may take his place.

This evening Tehiva has coughed less. If the medicine cures her I shall give the old woman a good present.

December 22nd

NOWHERE where I have been have the weather signs been scrutinised so carefully as here in the rough season. It is no doubt the same on every atoll, on account of the danger from storms. Sunrise is the hour which tells the most. A red sunrise and a cloud-bank to the east are bad signs. A few mornings ago I was on the wharf early to look at the weather, for I had thought of sending the cutter down the lagoon to get a load of firewood. Lucien and the chief were there, and the chief, as I came up, pointed to the sun, which was rising orange-red out of an indigo bank. It had a singularly angry appearance.

"Better not send your boat to-day," he said, and Lucien grunted agreement.

Elsewhere the sky was perfectly clear, and the lagoon was like a cuirass. But, not being quite a fool, I did not send the cutter.

All day the weather was very unsettled. I mean unsettled in its mind. There was no rain and little wind; what wind there was came in light puffs and blasts that ceased abruptly. It veered all round the compass. We made most of the cutters fast to a mooring chain, and the lighter craft were hauled ashore.

Evening brought a dead calm, but the sky was by this time overcast. Something was coming; it might be nothing worse than a strong blow; the glass had not fallen much, but the glass does not indicate a cyclone until it is upon you, so our trust in the glass is limited. Having seen that all my stores were high and dry, I went to bed and slept. I had done all that I could do.

Twice I was wakened by the wind. Each time I got up and looked out; the night was pitch-dark and the wind high, but there was nothing to be done about it. Later I was awakened again, by cries. Next moment I heard the alarm-bell ringing. The alarm-bell is in a belfry at the chief's house. It was clanging with feverish rapidity. I ran out and saw lights dancing in the

road. I stepped down from the veranda into a foot of water. No, not a foot; six or eight inches; but it seemed like a foot when I plunked into it.

I said something, which brought Tehiva out of bed. I told her to get back and stay there, and splashed out of my compound into the road, to follow the lights.

They were all on the way to the wharf. Hurricane lamps and torches made a first a weird confusion to the eye, of fantastic figures and flood-water. The hurricane lamps swung so wildly that the scene was perfectly chaotic. There was much shouting in high, hoarse voices. Outside my compound the water was not so deep as inside, but the wharf, except when the waves retired, was obliterated.

The cause of the disturbance, I soon learned, was not the high sea but an accident. A cutter which had been moored in a cove some way to windward had broken loose and fouled another in the inner anchorage. The interlocked pair seemed to be animate, like a pair of terror-stricken horses, and the rest were plunging almost as excitedly. Not only were the two boats battering themselves; there was a danger that the chain which held the others might part under their plunging, or that the one fastened to it might break adrift and cause a general *mêlée*. Then the whole crowd might be dashed to pieces at their moorings, or piled up on the wharf and their bottoms torn out of them.

The thrashing couple were not more than fifteen yards away, and two men attached themselves to life-lines and jumped off the wharf. After battling for some minutes with the sea they reached one of the cutters. The object was to disentangle the two and let the intruder run ashore. To save the rest, she would have to be sacrificed, and her owner should have seen that she was securely tied. It would have been impossible to fasten her now to the mooring-chain. But to disentangle her was not going to be easy.

The men holding the life-lines stood on one side, and the rest of us drew to the other, not to be killed if the cutter was hurled on the wharf. That occurred sooner than we expected. The men had hardly started to detach her when she herself broke away and, lifted high by a wave, crashed on the wharf. There she lay for some seconds like a wounded duck, her keel gone but not otherwise greatly damaged. Before another sea could lift her higher or draw her back she was seized and hauled away.

The fleet was now comparatively safe, and the two men returned. Voices resumed their natural pitch. The Paumotuan's

voice rises to an extraordinary altitude when he is excited, and at the same time takes a peculiar timbre of hoarseness. Between the hoarseness and the high pitch he almost loses his voice.

Three men were then stationed in the town hall to keep a watch on the boats and also on the sea, in case it should rise dangerously, and the remainder of us went home. Getting home was easier than leaving home; we had the wind behind us.

I sat in a chair till daylight, for I did not like the look of things. The wind was terrific, the night as black as the inside of a cellar. Now and then one of the look-out would sweep an electric torch over the anchorage, showing a turmoil of white-caps and leaping cutters. The water did not rise much in my compound, but there was water wherever I could see now. Tehiva had witnessed nothing like this, and I had difficulty in keeping her in bed.

When dawn came the east was like a great bruise—black and blue with patches of dirty yellow. The lagoon was a white and grey smother. I fought my way over to the town hall and was told that another cutter was ashore. It had broken away from the cove where the first had been anchored, and was in pieces on the beach. The other was still sitting distressfully, lifting every now and again to a wave. The men did not think that the blow would last much longer. If it did, they said, we should have to take to the higher ground. I thought it would be safer in the town hall, as this building has high foundations; but they said no, the foundations were of coral, and the sea might tear them away. Coral, compared with stone, is so light and friable. One of the men said that if it came to the worst he should climb a coconut tree and tie himself into it. I said that the tree might snap; he replied that it might, but if it was not too tall, it would stand, most likely. A young tree was the safest on such occasions. I saw the point of this, for a coconut tree gains its full girth in early maturity; after that it grows only in height.

I did not myself fancy a tree as a place of refuge. I made up my mind to try the higher ground first, if we had to go anywhere at all. The part of the village nearest to the ocean beach stands ten feet above high water.

The men added that we should know by midday what to expect.

Our kitchen was flooded, and we made coffee on a spirit-lamp in the bungalow. Tehiva made it, I should say: I found her up and at it on my return. I was afraid of the effect of the weather on her, but it was no use trying to put her to bed again now.

She was beginning to be less alarmed, as the water was still below the middle step of the veranda, and I gave her an encouraging report. In the village the road was quite dry. The wind was not perceptibly less strong, but the cloud-rack seemed to be higher than it had been at daybreak.

The palms were an extraordinary sight. The stems of the taller ones flexed as if they were rushes, and in gusts of high velocity their leaves, instead of whipping, streamed stiffly in the wind like things of wire. There were moments when one could not see the slightest vibration in them. Our roofs were holding well.

At ten o'clock the sea was still rising slowly and was over our middle step, but I thought that the wind was less. By eleven I was sure that it was, and Punua said that the danger was over. By noon there was no doubt at all that it was over, and we lunched with light hearts and excellent appetites. In the afternoon the wind fell rapidly, but though the lagoon became less yeasty the water did not fall till evening. My compound was under water when I went to bed, but next morning the sun was shining, the wharf was dry and the general aspect not far from normal. Except for the cutter sitting on shore and a few be-headed coconut trees, there was little sign, from my house, that anything extraordinary had happened. The ground was a bit soppy, but it was often so in high tides, through the water seeping up. These atolls are like sponges.

Two wrecked cutters, one of them capable of repair—we have a good boat-builder here—a score of coconut trees broken and three or four roofs lifted off, are the total of the damage.

Tehiva seems none the worse.

December 25th

CHRISTMAS DAY, and not a very cheerful one. I thought that Tehiva was none the worse for the storm, but yesterday she was evidently not at all well and to-day I made her stay in bed. Her cough is heavier and I think she is feverish. I have no clinical thermometer, so I can't be certain; but I have given her quinine, as it can't do her any harm.

I am worried about Tehiva, I must admit. She is thinner and has not her old vim, and her health used to be so splendid.

For some days after the storm the weather was beautiful. Yesterday it became cloudy and sultry, and to-day I have felt as if I were being smothered in a feather bed. This evening there is a welcome breath of dampness. The rain can't be far off. I long for a deluge. Rain, which one hates so in England, is here more than a relief; it is one of the greatest pleasures. One feels oneself lifting and expanding like a plant in a parched garden. I love to see it pounding on the lagoon and steaming off the ground, rolling down on us in ranks of mist which blot out everything. It not only cleans the air, it cleans one inside.

Tehiva has had tinned milk for her Christmas dinner, and I have had an omelette. We had contemplated tinned Christmas pudding. Just as well perhaps that she couldn't tackle that. I should have been half out of my senses if I had eaten Christmas pudding, but I should have had to eat some to please her, if she had wanted it.

Here, thank God, are the first splashes of the rain. I must go to bed now and comfort my poor child. She hates herself when she is like this.

January 3rd

THE *St. François* has been here again. She brought a French government doctor, on his way to Papeete from the Marquesas Islands.

I saw him with the supercargo as the latter came ashore, and being on the wharf to meet the boat, the supercargo introduced me to him, as a matter of courtesy: I had not known who he was. I at once asked him if he had a few minutes to spare; he replied that he had nothing to do till the steamer sailed, except look round the settlement, and I then said that I should be grateful if he would see my wife.

Tehiva met us on the veranda, where she had been standing to watch the boat's arrival. When I told her that this was a doctor who was going to examine her, she smiled, expressed her thanks, and showed no surprise. She told me afterwards that she had guessed he was a doctor.

In ten minutes he came out of the bedroom.

"Your wife," he said briskly, "is not at all well. I want to have a word with you about her treatment."

I understood that he wished to speak to me privately (Tehiva being just at his back), so I took him across to the office, a small room attached to the store, and sat him down.

"Now," he began, "I have bad news for you. Your wife has pulmonary consumption."

It was a shock, but not a great one. It was more like the confirmation of a fear. In my heart I had known all the time that there was something seriously wrong. How, I can't tell you. I know hardly anything of disease, and Tehiva was not visibly in such a state as to cause natural alarm. She had a cough, it had pulled her down, she might have had a temperature; but what was there in that to give me sharp anxiety? Yet sharp anxiety I had had.

"I see," he said, "that you feared this."

I thought I might as well say that I had.

"I think she would have a better chance in Tahiti," he went on. "Of course, I know that you have your business, but I think you should consider whether a change is possible. I don't say definitely that she will recover in Tahiti, but at any rate she will have a better chance there—better food and a better climate. The climate of Tahiti is more equable. Here it is too hot in the dry season and too rough in the wet season, as well as too stifling sometimes. I know the Paumotus."

"There is nothing to stop us from returning," I said after a moment. "I have a small plantation near Papeete that I can resume at any moment."

"That would be the very thing," he replied.

"What about treatment?" I asked.

"Fresh air is the main thing. Fortunately one does not have to impress that on people in these islands. I should let her sleep on the veranda in the dry season. In the wet season she would be better inside with door and windows open. Avoid chills or overheating. Moderate exercise. Plenty of rest. The best of food, but you will get that in Tahiti; there is no better food than the native diet; Tahiti vegetables are the best in the world. The want of them here is a serious loss. You must have a doctor when you get to Tahiti: he will tell you what to do if the disease progresses. Another thing, Tahiti should have a tonic effect; it is so much more cheerful there than here. These atolls would kill one with ennui if one was not well. I am glad you can take her to Tahiti. It will be ever so much better for her."

"I still don't understand," I said, "how she contracted the disease. Why should it have resulted from a cold when she seemed always so strong and healthy?"

"The seed of it was in her," answered the doctor. "She might have developed it in Tahiti. There is much more of it there than most people know. Natives go into a decline and die without ever seeing a doctor. They accept it as an incurable illness. Whereabouts is your plantation, by the way?" he asked.

"On the borders of Paea and Punaavia," I answered.

"A very good healthy district. Cooler than Papeete, and no violent winds. Here you might as well be on a ship at sea; there is a so-called lee side, but it is no protection."

He got up and shook my hand. "I am glad you spoke to me," he said. "Get her away as soon as you can."

"Is the disease advancing rapidly?" I asked.

He paused. "I'm afraid it is. I think it must have started before she caught the cold, but it must have advanced rapidly since then. Two months ago—is that right? . . . And you saw nothing wrong with her before that?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Well, the right lung is now rather badly affected, and the left lung is beginning. But don't lose heart. The mere fact of getting home may make a wonderful change, and better conditions should certainly arrest the disease. Everything is against her here."

"I will write a line and send it by the steamer," I said. "I can't leave here till I'm relieved."

"No. I understand that. If you have a boat I will go back to the steamer now and send you some medicine. A canoe would do."

"It won't take my men five minutes to get up sail on the cutter," I answered. "They're in the warehouse. I'll call them if that will do."

I paid him his fee and saw him off in the cutter. He would take no money for the medicine. Then I wrote my letter and caught the supercargo.

I was glad I had sent the letter before speaking to Tchiva, for I knew that she would raise objections. She had wanted me to come and tell her what the doctor had said, as soon as she saw him go; but I told her that I had an important letter to write and would tell her everything afterwards. Having seen the supercargo off, I waited a minute for the cutter, which was on

its way back, took the medicine from the coxswain and returned with it to the bungalow.

"Now," said Tehiva, meeting me, "what did the doctor say?"

"He said that this place does not suit you," I answered, "and that you must go back to Tahiti. I have written to Robson telling him what the doctor says and asking him to send a man."

I thought it best to let that out at once. The steamer was on the point of sailing, so there could be no question of getting back the letter.

"But you!" she exclaimed. "If you return to Tahiti now you will have the *fée-fée* again! You have not been away six months."

I told her that I was quite well and the *fée-fée* had left me; that I had only to be careful and do what the doctor had said and I should have no more of it.

She began to cry. "It will come back. You have not been away long enough. You don't know!"

We were still on the veranda, where anyone could see us. I took her indoors to the bedroom, and made her sit down on the bed with me. It was getting near lunch-time, and I knew that the boy would be coming to lay the table shortly. I have had a house-boy since we have been here.

"You are not to cry," I said. "I know what I am doing. The doctor says you will not get well here, but if you return to Tahiti you will. You need Tahiti food and Tahiti air. I am all right. Look at my foot." I pulled my shoe and sock off. "There is nothing whatever the matter with it. And there is nothing the matter with me. I have not had a touch of the *fée-fée* since I left. It is gone. I caught it in time. And now we are going to catch your complaint in time. That's all. There is nothing to cry about."

I dried her eyes with my handkerchief and kissed her.

"What kind of man should I be," I said, "if I did not do what the doctor says is best for you? Would you like me to be such a man?"

"But does he know that you had the *fée-fée*?"

"He knows," I replied. "I told him all about it. He looked at my foot and said it would be all right. But I should have gone," I added, "in any case. I had made up my mind what to do before I showed him my foot."

"Yes," she said, "that is just like you, and I would not have you another kind of man. But now that you are going and it is

all right for you to go, I am glad.—He did say—truly—that it would be all right for you?”

“Truly,” I replied. “I was pretty sure, before I asked him, that it would be all right, but I wanted to be able to tell you.”

“Well, then, I am glad that we are going. I had a feeling that I was not going to get well here.”

“Quite so. And in Tahiti you will soon be well. We will get one of your sisters to come and stay with us, and she will help you in the house, because you must not do too much.”

“If I let her come you must not make love to her. Promise me that.”

“I shall make love to her, of course,” I said. “That is my object in bringing her. Aren’t I always making love to other women?”

She looked up at me.

“Oh yes, I am a queer fellow, I know,” I said.

“What would you do if I were to die?”

“What indeed?” I said. “That is just why I am taking you back to Tahiti. There we shall live and grow old together.”

We heard the boy starting to lay the table, and she went away to see that the food was ready.

This evening she seems really better—at least in far better spirits. I am very hopeful, and less anxious than I was. That this should be so, after what I learned to-day, seems very strange.

• Yet there is encouragement in the fact that I have learned it—learned it, I mean, before it was too late; and it was most fortunate that I made up my mind quickly and wrote to Robson at once. I am sure that he will send a man as soon as possible, since I let him know that it was urgent, and we can leave in the schooner that brings him. The *Moana* or one of his vessels should be here this month.

I am as glad as Tehiva that we are leaving here. If the *féeffe* gets me again, well, it must get me. There are worse things, God knows, than the *féeffe*.

Now that I know what I am up against I am on my feet to fight. Till to-day I was fighting shadows. That was demoralising.

January 15th

A SCHOONER has just been sighted. I think she is the *Moana*.

Evening. The schooner that was sighted at noon was not the *Moana* but the *Tiare*, another of Robson’s vessels. She has my

successor on board. He is the man who was mauled by a shark at Hikueru, and was waiting for further employment when my resignation came, so it has not caused any trouble. He has been ashore, and to-morrow we shall take stock and I shall hand over to him. Next morning we shall sail.

The *Tiare*, when she leaves here, will have nearly a full load of copra, and we shall make only one or two calls on the way home. That is very satisfactory. I was afraid we might have a long roundabout voyage, which at this time of year might be disastrous; but we should have had either to chance it or wait for the steamer. Although I should have liked to meet Torrance again, the *Tiare* is a better boat for us than the *Moana*, being bigger and having better accommodation. The captain is giving up his cabin to Tehiva. It is a deck cabin, so she will have all the air that the weather allows. He is a little old wizened Norwegian, with a skin like leather and eyes like the sky.

Everything, almost, is packed. I got to work with my boys as soon as the schooner was sighted, and made Tehiva sit down and look on. She has been brighter ever since the day when she knew we were going. I have great and, I think, reasonable hopes that she will, with time and care, recover in Tahiti. She confessed to me that she was getting very homesick before we left Hikueru. That place was enough to make anybody homesick. I must go to bed now.

January 23rd

At last we are in sight of Tahiti. Though we have been only seven days at sea, this voyage has seemed endless.

Just as happened on leaving Hikueru, we ran into bad weather on dropping Makemo. It was so bad again that the deck cabin had to be closed completely, and the air was simply stifling in there. Tehiva nearly suffocated. It was awful. But there was nothing to be done. The air below was as bad or worse.

For a day we lay off and on off Niau, hoping that the wind would moderate sufficiently to allow us to land some cargo and take some copra aboard, but it kept up and we shoved on. We made no more calls, and I was thankful to have seen the last of the Paumotu Group. We were only just out of it when the weather improved. But the captain wouldn't turn back: he said if he did so we should only bring bad weather down on us again—there was a devil in those Paumotus—but I think he had Tehiva in his mind too.

For the last two days the weather has been perfect. It is just as if we had escaped from some devil—with nothing worse than a bad mauling, perhaps. Tehiva has been lying night and day in the cabin, with door and portholes open, breathing again, and recovering. I shall take her to our old quarters if I can get a room there, and have in my doctor at once.

She clapped her hands and crowed like a child when she saw Tahiti through the porthole. Tears came into my eyes, but there were none in hers. It was pure joy for her to see her island again. She is up now and walking about.

We are running down the coast now from Point Venus. The beauty of this island is more than earthly. I thought so, dimly, when I first saw it; but never were my eyes so lit with beauty as they have been this afternoon. There is a radiance, a splendour, a glory, as well as perfection of colour and form about this array of peaks, valleys and foothills; at the base dark and sleek with palms; midway, vivid with grass; crested with naked pinnacles. "A sight for sore eyes," the captain calls it, and if he has seen it once he has seen it a hundred times. It is balm to the eyes of all who come from the Paumotus. Nature loves contrasts; they are her answer to the common monotony of life; but nowhere on land or sea does she make such an answer as this, so magnificent, so inspiring. You must, though, have lived in the Paumotus to get the full force of it.

January 25th

I HAVE got a good room at the old place, airy, cool and quiet, with a balcony overlooking the bay. Tehiva wanted to walk here; she could have walked, I believe; but I thought it better to bring her in a car. For the present we are having our meals sent over from a restaurant.

I had the doctor to see her to-day. He made a very thorough examination of her, and said very much what the French doctor said. He thinks the disease must have been smouldering in her some time before we left Hikueru, and that the rough weather on the passage, and the cold she caught then, lit it up. He will not say much about the effect of the last bout; it has weakened her, of course, but it may not have done her any harm which rest will not repair. He advises me to keep her here a week

before taking her out to the plantation. He has instructed me what to do in case of a hæmorrhage. If her health improves there will be little danger of this. Everything depends now on the effect of the change. Rest and good food and the tonic of being home again may make a wonderful difference; on the other hand the disease has unquestionably got a hold. Still, lungs do heal, we know that.

He thinks that I may escape a return of the *féefée*, though it was a pity I could not have stayed away longer. But he sees that that was impossible. I could not have sent Tehiva back alone, and I could not have kept her at Makemo. I am not bothering my head about the *féefée*. What is it? An occasional dose of fever, and a leg that gets bigger as the years go by. It is not a thing of imminence; it is not a thing of life or death; this other is.

February 4th

AT home once more. The place is just the same, or very little different; my neighbour's sons have kept it in surprisingly good order. Yes, the place is hardly changed, but there is a difference: there is a gap which I cannot cross over. I am doing the same things that I used to do, but I cannot get back to the old life as we lived it; those happy days are cut off. There was a quality of youth in them which I cannot recover. Days as happy may return, perhaps. I wonder. But how young we both were then! Ten months ago, before I had the *féefée*, we were careless children, the pair of us. We shall never be that again. Youth may last long, but when it does it ends suddenly.

Still, to be here again is good. It is immensely good. I draw deep breaths of satisfaction whenever I look about me. Tehiva's happiness is an object-lesson. Happiness, I always used to think, depended mainly on the state of the body; you couldn't be really happy if you weren't well; whereas, if you were well, it took a lot to make you unhappy. But her happiness ignores the state of the body: it is of the spirit alone and self-sufficient. It makes one think that those incredible old martyrs may really have been happy at the stake. Certainly Tehiva's physical condition is not one of torture, but one would think it enough to throw cold water on happiness, especially if she remembers,

as she must, her perfect health when she was here before. But not a bit of it, I can see that.

We have her next younger sister here. Manu is her name. She is a bright, willing girl, and things should go nicely now.

February 16th.

I CAN see a difference in Tehiva already. I mean a physical difference. She is making up lost weight, and the cough is less frequent and less heavy. There is less sputum with it now. She eats excellently and sleeps well. I believe that having her sister here is a good thing for her, apart from the necessary household help it gives her; she is not left to herself so much as she would otherwise be, and a woman does need feminine company. At first she was inclined to be rather watchful, but she seems now to be satisfied that there is no likelihood of clandestine doings. Considering what the old custom of Tahiti was, as I have related in a former entry, it was not unnatural that she should be a little uneasy at first.

Manu does the washing and the cooking, and goes to the reef for fish. Tehiva sweeps and tidies, and they go about together, on the road and on the beach.

At the end of this week I am taking her in to see the doctor.

February 23rd

YESTERDAY I took Tehiva in to the doctor. It was four weeks since he first examined her, and he was very pleased with the progress she has made. There is a noticeable improvement, he said, not only in her general condition but in her lungs. He believes that the dry season may do much more for her, because, although the disease had made rapid advances in a short time, owing to unfavourable circumstances, it has not long been active. The longer the disease has been active, the longer it takes to cure, if it is ever cured, and the more difficulty there is. When I saw him last he did not speak of a cure: he spoke only of improvement. Altogether his tone was much more cheerful.

He asked me about my foot, and I told him I had nothing to report. He said that we seemed to be a pair of fortunate people. Well, that is looking at the matter from another angle—in his case, the medical angle. But I am not at all sure that he is not right from the angle of the common observer; for man surely is born to trouble, so, allowing that his falling into it is inevitable, he can call himself fortunate if he only gets out of it.

We did not stay long in town, or do much, but we had the pleasure of lunching at our old restaurant. Manu was with us; otherwise it was almost like old times. Tehiva wanted to stay and go to the theatre, but this I firmly vetoed.

We returned home in good order, and all goes well to-day.

March 7th

I BELIEVE the doctor was right: we are two fortunate people. There is no doubt that Tehiva continues to improve, and we are still in the wet season. A month or less and we shall be out of it. Then for six months of dry weather and continual sunshine. If that doesn't heal her lungs, it will be strange.

As for myself, I am as well as ever I was. Before I had the *féefée* I feared it, so I got it: we get what we fear. A doctor or nurse who fears disease will catch it, that is well known. Or it may be that we can see a thing coming. In returning here I did not fear the *féefée*, though by rights I should have feared it. If it were coming again I should have had it by now, for I have been back here six weeks. Either it has not come because I have not feared it, or I saw and knew that it was not coming. I should touch wood, should I? But I do not fear it now: it is a matter of indifference to me. Very, very odd this; for I think of it in others as a nasty disease. The sight of it in full development still disgusts me.

I am now finding a slight difficulty with Tehiva. She feels so much better, so much stronger, that she wants to do more than she should. As I cannot be always watching her, I have had to warn Manu about this. I tell them both that over-exertion may bring the whole trouble back. She was a good invalid, but she is a bad convalescent.

March 22nd

WE have paid the doctor another visit. He told Tehiva that she was a fraud: all that had been the matter with her was home-sickness. She understood, of course, that he was joking, but pretended to think that he meant it and would not want to see her any more. He made it clear that she was not out of the wood yet, and must come to him once a month till further orders. She then asked him if she might wash clothes and go out fishing. He said no to the first request; to the second he said that she might go if she did not use the spear. She might use the paddle in calm water, if she took care not to hurry or to paddle too long; but she ought not to go out alone, because of having to come back. The getting back was what she had to remember in any excursion. He did not mind much what she did as long as she never tired herself; but washing clothes was certainly too heavy a job, and so was the spearing of fish. She replied that her spear was a light one, but she did not succeed in persuading him. I am glad she brought the matter up, for she has more than once suggested that she might go fishing again, and I was sure that she ought not to do so. Fishing, for her, means spearing, and, though her spear is not a heavy one, it needs some force behind it. I was meaning to speak to the doctor myself about this, and about her inclination to get on too fast. Now that she has definite orders from the doctor, she is sensible enough to be patient. He told us both that it was only a matter of time and she would be able to do everything that she used to do, but that time and care were absolutely necessary, or all the good would be undone.

He says that there is no reason now why her lungs should not heal completely, but that a certain amount of care will always be necessary, to prevent the disease from breaking out again. That is understandable; there must be a weakness in the lungs, or there would not have been this outbreak. But this particular spot does seem to suit her.

April 8th

ONCE again we are in the dry season. The south-east trade has begun to blow, and the air is delightfully fresh and invigorating. We might have a squall or two now before the wet season finally gives up, but usually March is the end of it.

I shall wait a week or so before moving our bed to the veranda, as I want to run no risks at all.

Tehiva has been out with Manu in the canoe, and made one try-on to get the spear from her. It was a half-hearted attempt and she got a scolding for it. I feel I can trust Manu. She has a lot of sense. So has Tehiva, where other people are concerned. It is never easy to see one's situation as other people see it. You can't get outside yourself to look at it, and the inside view is mainly of wants. We talk about detachment, but we never quite detach ourselves from those.

At last I seem to be bridging that gap which cut me off from the old life. I don't mean that I am back in it: one can't, of course, go back, since time moves forward, or we move forward in time: but where there was a chasm there is now something like a continuance. By and by I may feel as if I had never been away, or that the break was no more than an incident. That is what one calls picking up the threads of one's life again. They did for a time seem to be severed.

When Manu goes there will be no distinguishable difference between the life of the present and the life of the past. I don't want her to go; I like her being here; and Tehiva will certainly miss her. However, she will stay for a good while yet. It is not impossible that she may find a man in the neighbourhood. There are indications that she may. If she does and settles near us, all the better.

One thing I always rather feared was the proximity of relations. We change our opinions with experience—or this girl is an exception. She was never the least embarrassment from the beginning.

April 27th

I AM writing in this diary for the last time. Something has happened which makes an end of it.



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An hour later she had a hæmorrhage. Manu and I were both with her, and did as the doctor had directed, keeping her recumbent and administering camphor and a cold compress; but, to my horror, we could not stop it. In five minutes she was dead.

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